The Life And Teachings of Sri Madhvacharyar

C.M. Padmanabha Char

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OF

ŚRI MADHVACHARYAR.

BY

C. M. PADMANABHA CHAR, B.A. B.L.,

High Court Vakil (Madras) residing at Coimbatore.

AUTHOR OF DHRUVA'S PENANCE, GOVARDHANESHA VILASA, (SANSKRIT DRAMAS) DWADASA STOTRAM COMMENTARY.

ETC., ETC, ETC.

FIRST EDITION.

January 1909 Price Rs 3.

To

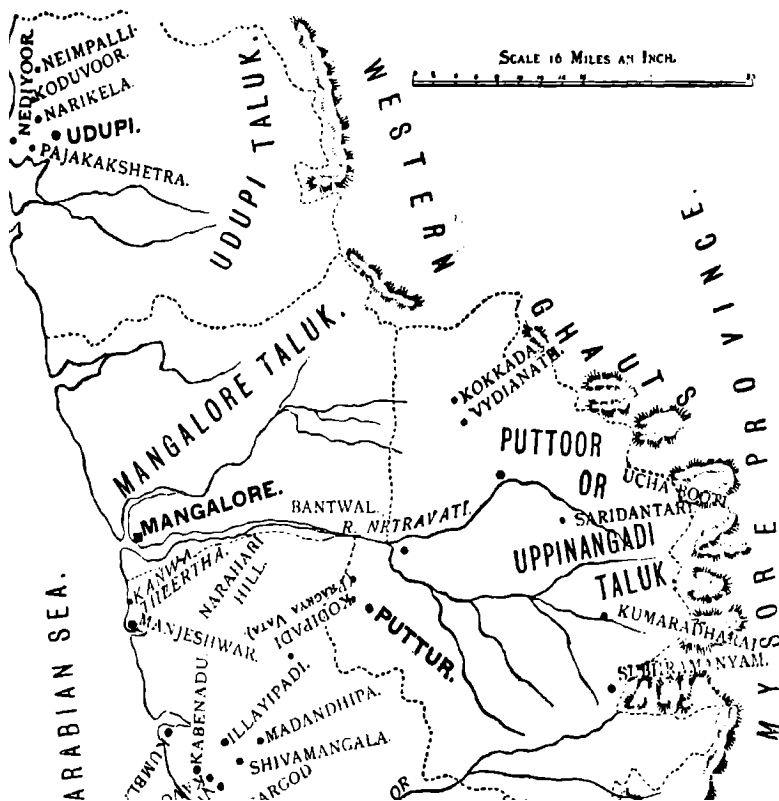
Sir P. N. Krishna Moorthy, B.L., C.I.E.,

Jagirdar of Elandur and

Retired Dewan of Mysore.

By virtue of his position
as a premier nobleman of the Mâdhva
community, and as a tribute of esteem for the
benificence, piety, and scholarship, that distinguished
his ancestors in the past, and continue to shed
lustre on him as the illustrious scion,
possessed, in a full measure, of
distinguishing qualities of
the head and heart,
This humble work is, by permission, respectfully

Dedicated
BY THE AUTHOR.

MAP OF SOUTH CANARA.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

The Life of Sri Madhva.

PART II.

Teachings of Sri Madhva.

PART I.

Life of Sri Madhva.

FRONTIS PIECE

SRI KRISHNA.

THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS

OF

SRI MADHVACHARYA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

TRADITION is strong on the West Coast that the land of milk and honey known as Malabar and Canara, was, within a comparatively recent geological age, a submerged area of the Arabian Sea. This country is a sharp slope from the Western Ghauts, known as the Sahya Hills, in Sanskrit Literature. It is a narrow strip of land hemmed in by a long wall of mountains on the east and the Arabian Sea on the west. This country is generally known to the orthodox as Parasuramakshetra. Parasurama is a well-known Brahmin Rishi of the Puranas, who is said to have waged repeated warfare against the Kshatriyas and relieved oppressed India from the tyranny of wicked kings. After accomplishing this mission of his Avatar, tradition goes on to say that he wanted a secluded spot for his own retirement and asked of the Ocean (the Arabian Sea) for a strip of land. An extent that could be measured by the throw of Parasurama's battleaxe was granted to him in response to his wish. Parasurama availed himself of the grant by making a good use of the concession, by throwing his battleaxe, which in its flight, covered the whole country now comprising both Canaras, both Malabars, Travancore and Cochin. So

goes the tradition. This is set forth in the District Manuals of Canara and Malabar. One who knows the barren tracts of the East Coast, and judges the west therefrom, will find himself grievously mistaken. The gigantic forest of the Western Ghauts, the never-failing down-pour of rain, the certain paddy crops of the annual harvest, the groves of the cocoanut and areca palm, with luxuriant clusters of jack studding the face of the country, impress the traveller with such a refreshing sense of luxuriance and plenty, that he feels himself more or less on enchanted soil, amidst sceneries that prove the country to be a pet child of Nature smiling under a shower of Nature's choicest blessings and bounties. The fertility of the soil, the picturesque Scotch scenery of hill and dale, the virgin woods of teak and rosewood, the waving expanse of green paddy, the luxuriant vegetation reminding one, by contrast, of patches of stunted bushes and arid wastes that pall the eye in Coimbatore and elsewhere, depict a picture altogether different from any that the traveller has known.

Looking at the people, he is no less struck with their peculiarities than by the physical aspect of nature. He will be surprised and delighted to meet a race of men and women very handsome in appearance and fair in complexion, with regular clear-cut features, dark eyes and flowing tresses. Women of the labouring classes, those of the lowest grade in the social scale, Sudra coolies, and Pariah labourers, even these would compare favourably with Brahmin ladies of the Chola country, in their clear white skin, flowing hair, dark eyes and symmetric build.

Their customs, manners and laws are no less peculiar than the traits noticed above. To the bulk of the

aboriginal people, viz. Namboodries and Nayars, marriage is an unfamiliar institution, and to them, inheritance by sons and daughters is almost unknown. It is obvious from the unique nature of the customs prevailing in Kerala, that the Aryan influence of the North was rather late in invading this territory. According to history, it was not before 750 A.D., that Mayuravarma, a Kadamba king, introduced Brahmins from Ahikshetra, when successive inroads of Mahomedan hordes convulsed Aryavarta and forced the Brahmins to emigrate therefrom into the South. These settled themselves in various parts of Southern India. The Kerala country was somewhat late in obtaining its contingent of Brahmin supply.

It may be that the flower of Brahmin intellect found its way into the South, when it found the atmosphere too hot for it in the North. It is some such reason that may perhaps account for the fact that the chief religious reformers of India, Sri Sankara, Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhva, who claim between them almost the whole of the Hindu population within their fold, were born in Southern India. Of these three, the first and last, Sri Sankara and Sri Madhva, belong to Parasuramakshetra itself.

Sri Sankara was born at Kaladi, a village east of the present Alwai Railway Station on the Cochin-Shoranur Line. As to the age of Sri Sankara, opinions are sharply divided. Western scholars are unanimous in fixing 788 A.D. as the year of his birth. Mr. C. N. Krishnaswamy Iyer adopts this view in his "Life of Sri Sankara". Theosophists, however, seem to think that this religious Teacher belonged to pre-Christian times. They say that he followed Budha within a century after. Mrs. Besant refers to a tradition in the

Dwaraka Mutt and to a document said to have been discovered in the State Offices of His Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda in support of her view. According to this theory, Sri Sankara was born in Yudhishtira Saka 2631 (B.C. 476), had his upanayana on 6th Chitra 2636 (B.C. 471), renounced the world by assuming Sanyasa on the 11th Kartika 2639, and passed away on 15th Kartika 2663 (B.C. 444).

Sri Ramanuja belongs to the tenth century. He was born at Sri Perumbudoor in the Chingleput District in 1118 A.D. Chaitra Sudha 5th of Pingala.

Sri Madhva belongs to the 13th century, and he was born in South Canara, a part of Parasurama-kshetra.

As to the sources from which materials can be gathered for a "Life" of Sri Madhva, it has to be remembered that Sriman Madhva Vijia by Narayana Pandithacharya is almost the solitary fountain of information on the subject. It is very probable that a biographical sketch of Sri Madhva was composed in his own time. Some one of his learned disciples seems to have kept a diary of his tours, and sketched his doings from time to time, recording all the important events of his life. These biographical sketches are not extant now. The only authoritative biography extant is the well-known Madhva Vijia written by Pandit Narayanacharya. This Pandit is almost a contemporary of Sri Madhva, for, his father Trivikrama Pandithacharya was a convert of Sri Madhva, who, having conducted a memorable controversy with the Master and become convinced, sought *chelaship* under him. This event was towards the latter part of Sri Madhva's career. Pandit Narayana-

charya might have been with his father in this eventful time. His junior paternal uncle, Sankarachar by name, had been Sri Madhva's Librarian for some time even before. This Library was stolen by enemies about this time, and it caused great sensation and stir. Hence, if Pandit Narayana was of mature years, he should certainly have known all about the Library theft and his father Trivikrama's controversy.

It is, however, doubtful if the author of the Sriman Madhva Vijia wrote the whole of Sri Madhva's life from personal knowledge. Two passages in Madhva Vijia (one in Chapter X and the other in Chapter XVI) show that there was an older biographer from whose poetical work this author derived information.

Making some allowance for poetic fancies, the account contained in Madhva Vijia is fairly full and authentic. It is, of course, not written on the lines of modern biographies with a full and minute description of men, places, and dates. This, however, does not detract from its merit seriously.

Quite recently, short sketches have appeared in the English language dealing with the chief events of Sri Madhva's life and times. Among them, a "Histotical Sketch of Madhva and Madhvaism" written by Mr. C. N. Krishnaswamy Iyer, M.A. deserves special mention. It is a laudable attempt to bring this Guru to the prominent notice of the English-reading public.

The chief difficulty in respect to the great sages of India is that very little is known of their personal history. Their work lives solidly amongst us. Their influence is actively felt everywhere. Dead bones are astir with life at the mention of their names. But as to the details of their doings, such as go to fill up volumes

of Western biographies, our knowledge is exceedingly poor.

In the case of Sri Madhva, the ignorance of Western savants is very amusing. Very few of them seem to have heard of this Teacher at all, and even these few seem to have very hazy and erroneous notions indeed.

For instance, a German Scholar of note whose knowledge of our religion and philosophy is fairly accurate and full, sets out Sri Madhva's system at some length with great appreciation, and ends by confounding Madhva with Vidyaranya. He says that Sri Madhva died an abbot of Sringeri Monastry!!! Aufrecht who is the author of a tremendous compilation for the benefit of all and sundry in the shape of a Dictionary of Oriental Names and Works—a volume known by the bombastic title of "Catalogus Catalagorum" devotes some space to Sri Madhva. After a short account of the Teacher, he confounds him with Anandagiri and Madhavacharya (Vidyaranya), mixes up in a jumble the works of all these various teachers, and fathers them all on Sri Madhva. Some of these are, of course, Advaita books whose tenets and principles it was the life-work of Sri Madhva to overthrow.

The District Manual of South Canara contains a short sketch. But this too is faulty in some respects. It says that Sri Madhva was born at Kalianpur and that he visited Vijianagar with the influence of a Sringeri abbot! These two startling assertions are sufficient samples of the prevailing ignorance.

Mr. Krishnaswamy Iyer's work is fuller and better informed. He availed himself of Madhva Vijia and took some trouble to investigate. Unfortunately, errors have crept in, even in his book, not only on matters of

opinion and dogma, but also on points of history and geography. For example, Mr. Krishnaswamy Iyer mistakes a series of places in South Canara District to be places in Northern India. He thinks that "Saridantara" referred to in connection with a tour of Sri Madhva is the doab between the Jumna and the Ganges, and that Vydianath of the same tour is the place which is now a Railway Station on the Chord-Line of the Punjab. But these places are well-known places of South Canara. Saridantara is the doab between Kumara Dhara and Netravati of Mangalore. Similarly, Vydianath, Paranti, Ucha Bhooti, are all places in the same district. Kanwa is not a river, but only a Sacred Pond near which the eight first ascetics of the Udupi Matts were initiated and installed. This place is near Manjeshwar and Kasargod. The tour was consequently not a northern tour at all. Mr. Iyer's information on this and several other points was evidently misleading.

In this state of affairs, I offer no apology for making an effort to explore the same field over again. Possibly, I may founder more grievously than my predecessors and make more serious mistakes by confounding facts with fictions. In spite of this risk, I think that attempts should be made to explore for facts in order to throw light on what is still obscure.

Before laying aside Mr. Krishnaswamy Iyer's valuable book, I cannot help giving expression to a sense of aching at the heart to observe the spirit in which the book seems written throughout. A vein of sneer lurks underneath the whole of the writing. The reader feels it more a caricature than a history. A lack of sympathy and appreciation is prominently in evidence. It looks as if the supposed bigotry of the

Madhvas upset the author's equanimity; it looks as if the author wrote parts at least of the Historical Sketch, gnashing his teeth at the slander in calling Sankara, old Maniman re-born, and the blasphemy in identifying Sri Madhva with Bheema of the Mahabarata fame.

After all, nobody is competent for any task unless he has his heart therein, unless he is in sympathy with the views he sets out and unless he is an admirer of the hero whose biography he undertakes to write. Mr. Iyer cannot, struggle as hard as he may, forget and forgive the wrong that he thinks Sri Madhva has done to his faith. He must be more than human, if he did so. If my remarks require verification, it is only necessary to glance at a few pages of Mr. Iyer's "Sankara", and compare the spirit in which that work is written with that of his "Historical Sketch of Madhva and Madhvaism." Madhvaism! One has only to mark the word. Madhva's system evidently does not even deserve to be cited as a philosophy, nor does it deserve to be called by any other name than "Madhvaism," as it is neither a reasoned scientific theory of the universe nor a true exposition of Vedic Theology, but some fad of the individual Madhva, an "Ism" of his own, and nothing more! Other instances proving Mr. Iyer's attitude may be referred to. But nothing is, however, gained by multiplying instances. A Madhva can easily spot them as he glances through his "Sketch."

After a perusal of the "Historical Sketch," a non-Madhva would simply run away with the idea that Sri Madhva was a bit of an Impostor who called himself Bheema and read strange theories into the Indian Scriptures. Whether this is a correct estimate of Sri

Madhva or not, it is left for true scholarship to judge. Mr. Iyer's version is Sri Madhva seen through "Non-Madhva", I had almost said, "Anti-Madhva" eyes. I shall make an humble endeavour to depict Sri Madhva as seen through Mâdhva eyes. Mr. Iyer confesses, besides, that his work is not addressed to the orthodox I see no reason why the orthodox should be treated with coldness and left severely alone and out of account. Let me address a short account to the orthodox and be satisfied with such poor thanks as these may extend to me for taking them into consideration.

CHAPTER II.

SRI MADHVA'S PARENTS AND BIRTH.

The country lying to the west of the Western Ghauts from beyond Bombay to Cape Comorin comprised the ancient Kingdoms of Konkana, Canara, and Kerala. The Konkana abutted on Mahârashtra country, whose capital was Doulatabad. The language which the Konkan people speak even now is a dialect of Mahratti. Canara consisted of the modern North Canara and South Canara, the former being included in the present Bombay Presidency, and the latter in the Presidency of Madras. Kerala was the southernmost strip, including the modern British Malabar and the Native States of Cochin and Travancore.

South Canara is the district with which we are most concerned as the native land of Sriman Madhva Muni. In this district, the taluq of Udupi is, for the same reason, a holy region for every person professing the Madhva faith.

It is difficult to say whether Udupi was in the middle ages, a place of any historical or political importance. The province of Canara seems to have been under the sway of Vishu Vardhana, the great Vaishnava King who was converted by Sri Ramanuja. It is learnt that this King broke the power of Chalukyan rulers in this part of Southern India. The Bairasu Wodears of Mysore held sway in 1250 A D., and flourished 'till 1336 A.D., when their kingdom became merged in the rising Empire of Vijianagar, the State that Mr. Sewell refers to as 'a forgotten Empire' and Mr. Suryanarayana Rao as 'the never-to-be-forgotten Empire' of this peninsula.

The Chandragiri river that runs between Bekal and Kasaragod in South Canara, was the southern boundary of the ancient Tuluva Kingdom. It is a magnificent stream in the rainy season. Tradition forbids Nair women of Kasaragod, crossing this river.

Eight miles north of Kasaragod is the ancient town of Kumbla, now a Railway Station, situated close to the sea on a peninsula. It was a place of great importance at this time, though it is now much decayed. It was the Head Quarters of a Chieftain whose descendants are now in receipt of a small Government pension under the titular name of "Kumbla Rajahs". Udupi and Mangalore were probably under the immediate rule of this Chieftain, Mangalore being only about 22 miles north of Kumbla.

At the time of our history, one Jayasimha was the Kumbla Ruler. He came into contact with Sri Madhva in the latter part of the Guru's life and was evidently a great admirer of the Teacher.

Among the communities that played a great part in the history of the times, the Jains seem to have

been very prominent. Their Bastis, Bettoos, and Stambhas, furnish eloquent testimony to the vast influence they wielded. The Karkal Statue of imposing height and weight, said to be 41 feet high and 80 tons in weight, is a striking item of proof. The Mudbidri temple of 1,000 pillars is a magnificent monument of their architectural skill. The pillar at Hale Angadi towering 50 feet high is a remarkable specimen of the kind, unsurpassed for delicacy of workmanship. Similar statues of colossal height and weight, speak volumes for the dominating influence that this community possessed in Sri Madhva's time and for some centuries later.

The Brahmin communities of the West Coast are generally classed as Konkans, Saraswats, and Shivalli sects. The Shivallies are Tulu-speaking Brahmins, and it is with these that we are most concerned, in the present narrative.

Shivalli is an alias for Udupi otherwise known as Rajata Peetapuram. These names are derived from the deities of the two ancient temples in this town. The temples of Chandra Mouleeswara and Ananteswara both face the east, one being in front of the other. These were the most prominent features of old Udupi, before Sri Krishna's temple came into existence in Sri Madhva's time.

Udupi is a short designation for Chandra Mouleeswara, *Udupa* being the Sanskrit word for the Moon. In the temple of Ananteswara, the deity is seated on a pedestal of silver. Hence the town is known as Rajata Peetapura. Shivalli is a corrupt form of the Canarese expression Siva Belli, the silver of Siva, in allusion to the silver pedestal aforesaid.

It is a matter for conjecture, whether the Shivalli Brahmins of the period prior to Sri Madhva's avatar, were Sivites pure and simple, or belonged to the sub-division of Brahmins known as the followers of the Bhagavata Sampradayam. It is very likely that a large section belonged to this class.

Even now, this sub-section of Brahmins following the Bhagavata Sampradayam, is found in large numbers in various parts of South Canara. They represent the transition stage between the Sivite and the Vishnavite. Their chief tenet is that Siva and Vishnu are deities of equal greatness. They wear *namams* (tracings) in gobi mud or sandal in a manner quite similar to Mâdhvas, without using the metallic seals (mudras,) which alone distinguish them from Mâdhvas.

It is important to note that except in the shrine of Sri Krishna, which was founded by Sri Madhva, all the temples of Udupi and the neighbourhood possess Lingam as the idol of worship. Nowhere is there an image of Vishnu such as we find in plenty in the districts of the East Coast. Tradition and local Puranas call some of these Lingams representatives of Vishnu and others as those of Siva. Ananteswara is belived to be a Vishnu temple though the idol is a Lingam. Tradition says that it is the God Parasurama himself that took his seat on the silver pedestal.

If we observe the ritual of worship still obtaining in the temples, whether the idol be Vishnu Lingam or Siva Lingam, we are struck by the circumstance that the procedure, methods, and recitations are not those regulated by Pancharatra but by the Agamas. Siva Sahasranama is resorted to in these so-called Vishnu temples as often as Vishnu Sahasranama. Little

temples dedicated to Bhootas form the adjuncts of almost every temple in this district. These Bhootastans are tell-tale remembrancers of devil worship characteristic of aboriginal fetish. In no other district is the worship of family spirits and temple Bhootas so largely in vogue, their propitiation on every conceivable occasion, auspicious and inauspicious, being universally deemed an indispensable duty.

In corroboration of the view that the Bhagavata Sampradayam had a strong footing, it may be observed that this is the sect that holds possession of most of the ancient temples, and officiates therein even now. The very nomenclature of some of the deities is significant. The deity in Kooduvooru is known, for instance, as Sankara-Narayana. In other places, it is Hari-Hara. It is very often thus a combination of Vishnu and Siva in some paraphrased shape.

It does not appear that the Visishtadwaita creed of Sri Ramanuja ever secured a foothold in Parasuramakshetra, though this secession from Sri Sankara's faith affected the Chola country a great deal, and parts of Carnata too. Srirangam and Conjeevaram were the centres of the Sri Vaishnava propagandism, but its echo was but feebly heard beyond the mountain barrier of the Western Ghauts. After all, Sri Ramanuja did not precede Sri Madhva by more than a couple of hundred years.

The only compromise that took place in pre-Madhva days between the Sivite and the Vishnavite was the reform of Bhagavata Sampradaya. These adopted some Vaishnava ideas in ceremonial observances and paid a special regard to Yekadasi.

The parents of Sri Madhva probably belonged to this sect of Brahmins. Madhyageha the father of Sri

Madhva, was a pious Brahmin, who had scrupulously learnt all that the fashionable orthodox literature of the day had taught him. He had studied the Vedas and Vedangas with care, and assiduously swallowed all the philosophy that a liberal scholarship was bound to devour.

Whether the learned Brahmins of the day worshipped Hara or Hari-Hara, whether their practices were those of Sivites or of Bhagavatas, their philosophy was at this time the Adwaita of Sri Sankara. Monism was the official creed, so to say. There was no other philosophy that had disputed its soundness and its sway. Pandits who cared for reputation studied the Advaitic literature commonly referred to as a lach and a quarter granthas, and digested and assimilated as much of them as possible, into their thought.

But a secession was gradually in formation. Sri Sankara's monism was no doubt accepted without open protest, but a vague feeling of unrest was slowly taking shape. The Upanishads, the Bhagavatgeeta, and the Brahma Sootras, were no doubt assumed to inculcate the unreality of cosmos and the reality of Para Brahmam alone, but in the prevailing harmony of thought, a jar of dissent was becoming feebly audible. It was probably the distant echo of the reformation in the Chola Kingdom; or may be, it was an instinctive feeling of protest due to the inherent tendencies of devotional minds.

Some renowned scholars of the day spoke out their mind in the matter. They said that the technical "Self-Realisation" forming the be-all and end-all of Sri Sankara's creed, was a delusive mirage absolutely beyond reach. They adverted to the blasphemy lurking in the idea of the Jeeva and Brahman being

regarded as one. The emotional craving of the human mind to go down upon knees before a loving and forgiving Father, and pour forth prayers of devotion unto Him, asserted itself powerfully, so as to throw the cold intellectuality of monistic identity into shade. The news got abroad that some learned men such as the Guru of Purushottama Theertha alias Achuta Prekshacharya had whispered with their dying breath, a peremptory injunction to their Sishyas (disciples) not to practice "Soham," because the attainment of godhead inculcated thereby, was an impossibility.

These were signs of unrest. The public mind was in a state of tension and suspense. The waves were evidently heaving for a storm. A vague sense of dissatisfaction, a consciousness that something was wrong somewhere, that some screw was out of joint, perplexed men's minds day by day. Doubts and misgivings were slowly gaining volume and strength. Mental struggles, vague contritions, inaudible whispers, and secret schisms, were developing slowly but surely into shape, to prepare society to welcome a Luther.

It may be that the unrest was not entirely due to the doctrinal heresy of Adwaita, but to moral and ritualistic heresies also. It may be, that the land, where the Jain flourished with his mission of inoffensiveness to animal life, regarded cruelties in sacrifices and excesses in Sakti worship, with horror, and longed for change. Anyhow the old order of things wished for a change yielding place to a new.

Mahdyageha Batta was evidently a prototype of this restless class. He was rather sceptical about "Soham." He turned all his attention to Itihasas and

Puranas, studied Bhagavata and Mahabarata, and spent his time in expounding these, to the best of his lights, to large audiences. This Puranic learning, especially his scholarship of Mahabharata, earned for him the revered designation of Bhatta.

The true name of Madhyageha Bhatta remains unknown. The meaning of this word conveys the idea that he was the occupier of a central house in the village. "Naduvantillaya" is the Tuluva designation. This Pandit was evidently named and referred to, with respect to the situation of his house. The veneration in which he was universally held, caused people to call him by a round-about designation out of respect.

Madhyageha Bhatta was neither a prodigy nor a recluse. He believed in the Smrities and Puranas and cordially adhered to the duties promulgated therein. He maintined a house-hold on the lines laid down by law for a Hindu follower of Grihasthasrama. He minutely adhered to its duties, faithfully observed the fasts, performed the ceremonies, and scrupulously attended to guests; in short, he was an ideal house-holder of orthodox habits. In belief, as observed already, it does not appear that he was warm or enthusiastic over an Impersonal Brahman or an illusion-creating Maya. He had his doubts about monistic dogmas and he kept these doubts to himself. He believed in God and worshipped Him with genuine piety.

This Brahmin was not a mendicant Vaidic, as might be supposed. He owned some lands which were tilled for him by tenants, kept bullocks and cows in his stall, and had enough to live upon as a respectable villager. But his means did not keep him always

above want. He was occasionally led into embarrassments that compelled him to incur monetary liabilities.

Added to these petty troubles, poor Madhyageha had had to encounter some serious calamities. He had had two sons born, and both of them had died as infants. He had only a girl left. The strong conviction that salvation was out of the question without a son to perpetuate the lineage, bore down upon him like a night-mare, so much so, that he felt life to be an utter void, without male issue. From his village (Pajakakshetra) to Udupi, it was a walk of some hours, but he regularly repaired to the latter place to worship in the great temple of Ananteswara and pray for the blessing of a son. He prayed to the deity, day after day, for twelve long years, praying for an esteemed son endowed with divine qualities. He longed for a son as eminent as Parasurama, the founder of the Kshetras of the West Coast, and capable of commanding the respect of Gods and men. A merciful Providence listened to his earnest prayers and said "Amen." On a grand occasion when people had assembled in large numbers at the temple and were engaged in celebrating a festival, it being the half-yearly change of Solar equinox, a great announcement was made by a devotee. This man got to the top of the tall flag-staff pillar in front of the temple, and predicted, as one possessed, that by the grace of Ananteswara, Vayu would appear as an Avatar, ere long, amidst them, for purifying religion.

This was indeed gratifying news. To Madhyageha, who understood the message as a reply to his ardent prayers, the annoucement was particularly gratifying. To all good people and true, the news was an assurance of better times about to come. For, as already

stated, there was evidently unrest everywhere, a general feeling of vacuity in respect of God. The times seemed to demand with an insistance that compelled attention, with an earnestness that the Gods themselves could not ignore, that a Hero should be born, a hero capable of storming the old forts and citadels, and giving good men and true, peace and solace by a bloodless Reformation.

Sriman Madhva Vijia says that the Gods themselves appealed to Vishnu, who thereupon ordered his Bhakta, Vayu, to go down as an avatar and accomplish the sacred mission.

The belief is not uncommon, not only in India but in every country boasting of a revealed religion, that it is God that, in some mysterious way, inspires noble thoughts, words, and deeds, and that God occasionally presents himself in some mortal form to accomplish great ends by descending among men and giving a personal impetus to some mighty undertaking resulting in a great upheaval of society or in some great turn or revolution in the affairs of humanity. Whether the Supreme God and His Ministers held a "conclave" in a meeting hall and passed resolutions with Parliamentary decorum or not, it may not admit of doubt to those that believe in the efficacy of prayer, that when men cry earnestly for a hero or saint, and a hero or saint does appear in their midst, they naturally take it that God sent him to them with the necessary inspiration to fulfill His Will.

Mysterious indeed are the ways of Providence in choosing the instruments of His great purpose. Of all the learned men, why He chose Madhyageha Bhatta, and of all the places in the world, why He

chose Pajakakshetra, it is not perhaps given to mortal reason to discover. In choosing places and persons for His or their avatar, God and Devas show no partiality towards titled nobility and cities of palaces, and no bias against poverty and hamlets. They very often choose the poor and the humble, and love to dwell amongst them in the huts of a petty village. Sri Krishna did so, passing the period of His infantile years in rural scenes hidden from publicity, and appearing on the larger theatre in proper time to fulfil His purpose.

The school of thinkers who rely on heredity as the only reasonable explanation for every phenomenon of organic evolution, will find it hard to account for Sri Madhva as the natural outcome and product of Madhyageha's brains, added, it may be, to the feeble intellect of his consort Vedavati. Those who decline to accept anything extraordinary or supernatural, who are sceptical about outbursts of genius, who account for everything and everybody by measures and standards derived from historical precedents, and who deal with history as a science by belittling great men as merely the creatures and products of circumstances and environments, will find it no easy task to trace the evolution of the great religious teachers that have revolutionised Indian Philosphical thought.

Not only to the evolutionist and the scientific historian, but to all and sundry, it would be exceedingly interesting, of course, to know all about the personal history of Sri Madhva's parents, all about their status and occupation, their studies and grooves of thought, their religious and social world, in short, all about the life they led, so that it may be seen whether the birth and growth of Sri Madhva's genius

could be accounted for from the human stand-point of heredity. I am, however, one of those that believe in great men as being a law unto themselves. I think heroes create circumstances and subdue their surroundings rather than submit to be fashioned and shaped by them. They are no creatures and slaves thereof, but their masters. They make headway not because of, but very often in spite of, adventitious causes.

To resume the thread of the narrative, Madhyageha had every reason to congratulate himself upon his good fortune, when the prospect of a son being born to him, became evident. He looked back upon the twelve long years he had spent in penance and prayer, and shed tears of gratitude that the boon was, after all, well-nigh within reach. Once, he had looked upon himself as a singularly unfortunate person by reason of the domestic bereavements he had had to suffer. He had changed his residence from Udupi to Pajakakshetra, probably for this reason, among others. Ill-luck seemed to be deserting him now, and he felt that he had reason to consider himself quite a happy man.

If Pajakakshetra was, at this period, the forelorn village that it looks at present, Madhyageha would hardly have chosen it for his abode. No doubt, his lands were in the neigbourhood, but they were tilled by tenants. It is only under the aegis of Western Civilisation, that solitude is losing all its charms, and that rural life gravitates towards town life for one reason or another, with the inevitable result, that villages sink in importance and towns are greatly augmented in size. Our ancestors, however, preferred the seclusion of hamlets, in order to pursue

the even tenor of their way, far from the madding crowds' ignoble strife.

But Pajakakshetra was not, however, an uninhabited jungle. There must have been a few houses in rows or clusters, in the middle of which, Madhyageha had his dwelling. His neighbour on the east, Poorvalaya, was evidently an obliging and estimable man. He had besides, a congenial society of friends and relations whom he entertained by Puranic recitals. Close to this village, there was a popular school-master whose *tol* was attended by numerous pupils. His residence was not far away. A well-known pond, known as Danda Theertha, still marks the scene of this school-master's labours. Anticipating our story a little, I may mention that Danda Theertha is believed to have been a gift of Sri Madhva to this village-teacher, in gratitude for the education he received in his *tol*.

Furthermore, Pajakakshetra was a holy place. The vicinity of the hill known as Vimanagiri lent this village a great importance. On this hill, is situated the ancient temple dedicated to Goddess Durga. This temple is traced to Parasurama himself. Pooja is conducted on a grand scale in this pagoda. Festivals are celebrated on a costly style. Pajakakshetra situated at the foot of the hill, would natually have been the resort of a floating population drawn from every quarter, to witness the Car festival and other celebrations of the ancient Devasom.

Besides the Durga temple, the four Theerthas of Parasurama, known as Parasu Theertha, Dhanus Theertha, Gada Theertha and Bana Theertha, are in the vicinity of this village, within the radius of a

mile or two. These are ponds of sanctity largely resorted to by pilgrims.

Thus, the Vimanagiri which stands against the sky as a treeless rock, looking, as its name imports, like a huge inverted canopy whose concave vault is hidden from view, was, by itself, a picturesque attraction. The Durga temple perched on the top, was another. To crown all, there were the holy Theerthas round the hill. These features of attraction were sufficient to conjure up a Brahmin settlement in the neighbourhood.

In this hamlet of Pajakakshetra, Sri Madhva was born on the Vijia Desami Day of a Vilambi year. The corresponding year of Salivahana Saka, or of the Christian Calendar, will be discussed in a separate Chapter, as the point is involved in some confusion and obscurity.

This great birth marked a red letter day in the village calendar, as it does in the Calendar of the Mâdhvas since. It was an occasion for general rejoicing. Madhyageha enjoyed the happiness of brotherly ties and fellowship, to an extent that is rare in the society of towns. When the drums, pipes, and cymbals, announced the happy news, the simple folk of the village flocked to Madhyageha's house to offer congratulations. The Bhatta himself had been absent from home at the time. When he hastened home at the call of the village music, he found himself the recipient of universal felicitations.

Everybody looked at the baby and pronounced it wondrously beautiful. The radiant face of the little infant was lovely to behold. Some of the seers recalled to memory, the prediction at the temple of

Ananteswara, and observed that the superb face of the babe gave assurance of the prophecy being fulfilled. Every one of the villagers felt it a matter of personal pride and joy, that their revered Bhatta had thus become the donee of a divine boon. Friends and kinsmen hastened backwards and forwards with their good offices, and pressed Madhyageha to accept obligations. The eastern neighbour, Poorvalaya, gifted a milch-cow at once for the benefit of the new-born babe. The genuine cordiality that was manifest, was a sample of sincere fellow-ship of which the villagers were capable. It calls up a sigh of regret that in the so-called refinement of modern civilisation, society can hardly boast of such examples of simplicity and brotherhood.

The orthodox believe that "Vayu" himself took incarnation as the infant son of Madhyageha. He was Hanuman, the Monkey-God, in Rama's avatar. He was Bheema in Sri Krishna's. Now he appeared again in Pajakakshetra as the third avatar, in order to propound and promulgate the teachings of Srimad-Badarayana.

Thus began the red-letter day of Madhaygeha's house, of Pajaka village, and of the Mâdhva community soon to spring into existence. This avatar added one more link to the sanctified memories associated with this locality, for, in the light of subsequent events, every true Mâdhva values the spot where the Master was born, as the holiest of the holy shrines in India.

The pilgrim that visits the place is shown the birthplace of the great Teacher. It consists of a poor-looking room, whose roof probably consisted

of thatch in those days. Pious charity has now replaced the roof with slabs of stone and metal, laid out well. In order to prevent decay and desecration, one of the eight ascetics of Udupi, viz., the Swami of Kanoor Mutt, has included the house in question within an enclosure of substantial building erected around so as to protect and preserve the shrine of Sri Madhva's birth quite intact.

A small temple adjoins these buildings. Herein, there is the imprint of two feet visible on a slanting floor of rock. These are worshipped as the feet of the Guru. This constitutes the chief memorial that perpetuates the recollection of his nativity. It must be admitted that posterity has not shown over-much of enthusiasm in the matter of memorials, for, the temple referred to is small and poor-looking, and no expenditure worthy of the cause, seems to have been incurred for purposes of commemoration.

A description of this locality is not complete without a reference to the tank known as Vasudeva Theertha. It has a history of its own. Tradition says that when Sri Madhva was a mere boy, he sanctified it as a Theertha for the benefit of his father. On a certain occasion, it is said that Madhyageha found it hard to go round the Parasurama's Theerthas as was his custom, because the day happened to be a very short Dwadasi. Boy Vasudeva then made the tank in question as sacred as all the other Theerthas put together. When the assertion of Vasudeva on the subject was received with scepticism, Vasudeva promptly pulled up a small Aswatha tree by the root, and planted it root upwards. He pledged his word that the tree would

grow and thrive, if fed with the water of the new Theertha. Tradition asserts that the test was so successful as to inspire faith. This tree is still alive and may be seen not far from the tank.

These episodes and many others crowd into our memory as we stand on the spot and reflect. Peace and *tapas* reign supreme in the place. In the solitude, the pilgrim feels the bracing atmosphere of piety and holiness. Among the ideas associated with the locality, a feeling of awe and reverence dominates in the pilgrim's mind. If devotionally inclined, he thinks it possible that the dust of Sri Madhva's feet might be still hovering over the floor, and he prays it might purify and save him.

CHAPTER III.

Date of Sri Madhva.

The date of Sri Madhva's birth is not free from doubt and controversy. The District Manual of South Canara fixes 1199 A.D. as the correct date. This view seems primarily based on the enquiry of Buchanan, who travelled through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, in or about 1799, and published a large volume about his travels. It seems that Buchanan gathered all the leading Pandits at Udupi and got the information about the date. Mr. C. N. Krishnaswamy Iyer too adopts the same conclusion. He bases it on the authority of Sriman Mahabarata Tatparya Nirnaya, Chapter XXXII, verse 131, and Chapter IX, verse 100. These verses look as if the author (Sri Madhvacharya himself) has given the date of his birth as 4300 of Kali Yuga, which corresponds to 1199 A.D.

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The geneological lists maintained in the Uttaradi Mutt and other Matams, show that the Guru was either born or became a Sanyasi in Vilambi in 1040 Saka, (i.e. 1118 A.D.) and disappeared from the earthly scene of his labours in Saka 1120 Pingala (A.D. 1198). It is true that the Matam List is long and minute, entering into great details about the Jovian year, month, and date, with corresponding Saka year also. It records the date of accession to the Pontifical seat of the respective Matathipathis, and the year, and place, of Brindavan, of every ascetic, down to modern times.

Among the scholars that have adopted the Matam date, may be mentioned Aufrecht, the auther of "the Catalogus Catalagorum" which is a sort of Encyclopædia of Oriental information, and Dr. Ramakrishna Bhandarkar, the well-known Sanskrit Scholar of Bombay. Both of them adopt and publish the date of the Matam List as the most authentic record on the subject. Mr. Subba Rao, M. A., of the Salem College, considers it almost a sacrilege to doubt the authenticity of the Matam List. He argues that 1040 Saka, Vilambi, is the year in which the Guru became a sanyasin. He is supposed to have been 12 or 16 years old at the time, and therefore it is said, that he was born in 1025 or 1029 Saka (1103 or 1109 A. D.). Mr. Subba Rao makes no reference to the texts relied on by Mr. C. N. Krishnaswamy Iyer. He thinks 1199 A. D. is the first anniversary of the Guru's departure, and that, by some confusion, it was mistàken for the date of birth.

Prima facie, one would certainly feel convinced on the strength of the Matam List, and the onus would be laid very heavily on anybody that questioned its

soundness. There are, however, certain points that bewilder the enquirer and cast a doubt on the point.

Dr. Bhandarkar notes that, among the Matam Lists that he saw, the oldest contained no Saka date at all, but the Jovian years alone, such as, Vilambi, Pingala, Rakthakshi &c. The corresponding Saka date is the result of a recent conjecture and calculation.

Aufrecht's views are notoriously faulty on many a point, and especially so with reference to Sri Madhva. It has been already pointed out that he confounds Ananda Theertha with Ananda Giri, and credits our Guru with the authorship of well-known Advaita Text Books. It is a wonder who furnished information to Aufrecht for his "Catalogus Catalogorum."

From the above, it muy be seen that, roughly speaking, 1199 A.D. and 1103 A.D. are the two dates somewhat influentially supported by well-balanced cogency of reasoning.

Recent Archæological discoveries tend to show that these dates are all wrong. Sri Madhva had four pûpils (out of many) who came to the Pontifical seat after him, one after another. They are Padmanabha Theertha, Narahari Theertha, Mâdhava Theertha and Akshobya Theertha. These were contemporaries of Sri Madhva, were ordained Sanyasins at his hands, and studied under him. Padmanabha Theertha was Pontiff for seven years, Narahari Theertha for nine years, Mâdhava Theertha for seventeen years, and Akshobhya Theertha for seventeen years. It is important to note that the interval between Sri Madhva's departure and Narahari Theertha's succession is only seven years. This Narahari Theertha had a very eventful career.

He belonged to Chicacole in Ganjam. His father was evidently a Minister of the King that reigned in Kalinga. Narahari Theertha, after he became a Sanyasin, acted as Regent for many years, during the minority of the King. We find that inscriptions ranging from 1186 Saka, to 1215 Saka, exist in the temple of Sri Koorma in Chicacole and Simhachalam in Vizagapatam. These inscriptions are very clear and testify in eloquent terms to the rule of Narahari Theertha and the good work he did in his own State and in the neighbouring country. One inscription (1203 Saka) is very suggestive. It consists of nine Sanskrit verses which have been deciphered and translated by the Archæological Department. The rendering is to the following effect. (The purport alone is given below.)

Verse 1 :—The pious ascetic Purushottama was born to instruct the wise. He was the chosen favourite of Vishnu.

Verse 2 :—His words commanded universal respect. His reasoning subdued disputants, as the goad does elephants.

Verse 3 :—Ânantha Theertha received ordination at his hands. It was he that brought back the straying cows of Vyasa into the fold, by means of the ascetic's staff he wielded.

Verse 4 :—His words were dear to Vishnu and were calculated to confer Heaven.

Verse 5 :—His holy precepts enabled men to reach the lotus-feet of Hari.

Verse 6 :—Narahari Theertha received lessons under him and ruled in Kalinga.

Verse 7 :—Narahari Theertha fought the Sabaras in battle and protected the Sri Koorma temple.

Verse 8:—Narahari Theertha was of great prowess.

Verse 9:—"Hail! In the prosperous Saka year joined with the fires (3) the Sky (0) the pair (2) and the earth (1) (i.e. in 1203) in the month of Mesha, on the day of the moon-crested Siva in the bright fortnight and on an excellent Wednesday, having built a temple in front of the Lord Kamata, consecrated therein, with pleasure, this god Yogananda Narasimha, the bestower of bliss."

Professor Keilhorn interprets the date mentioned herein as 29th March 1281 A.D. the week-day being Saturday. The Sanskrit word might be "Sourer" instead of "Soumye".

The date of the inscription is in conflict with the theories noted above, Mr. Subba Rao's, and Mr. Krishnaswamy Iyer's. If Narahari Theertha was engaged in Chicacole in 1203 Saka, he must have joined Sri Madhva some years later. But according to Mr. Subba Rao, Sri Madhva disappeared in 1120 Saka and Narahari Theertha died in 1135 Saka. According to Mr. Iyer's dates, Narahari Theertha could not have been in Chicacole or Simhachalam in 1203, 1214 and 1215, the dates of the several inscriptions in his name.

Mr. Subba Rao does not deem it necessary to offer an explanation about the inscriptions. Mr. Iyer says he is not prepared to accept the inscription dates in preference to the Nirnaya Texts referred to above.

It may be remembered that the great Vidyaranya of Sringeri Monastery was a minister of the Vijianagar King, Bukka I, the founder of that dynasty. Vidyaranya got a grant in Saka 1268 for his Sringeri Mutt. Thus the period of Vidyaranya is beyond doubt.

Vidyaranya's contemporary was the great Sri Vaishnavacharya, Vedanta Desikar. Authentic history assigns September 1268 A.D. (Saka 1130) as the date of his birth, and he lived for about 108 years. It is recorded in Vedanta Desika Vaibhava Prabhavam, page 70, that on a certain occasion a great controversy occurred between Vidyaranya on the one hand and Akshobhya Muni the fourth disciple of Sri Madhvacharya on the other, over the import of Thathvamasi (तत्वमसि). A reference to arbitration being suggested, the Vijianagar King referred the matter to Vedanta Desikar of Srirangam, whose decision was sent in favour of Akshobhya Muni. This episode rests on tradition as well as on the disinterested record in the Desika Vaibhava Prakasika. It is therefore beyond doubt that Akshobhya Theertha was a contemporary of Vedanta Desikar and Vidyaranya. Jayatheertha Vijia refers to Jayatheerthacharya, our great commentator, as having come in contact with Vidyaranya. The date adopted by Mr. Subba Rao makes all this a veritable impossibility. According to Mr. Subba Rao and the Matam List, Akshobhya died in 1169 Saka (1247 A.D.) long before Vedanta Desikar was born and longer still before Vidyaranya's birth.

There can be no doubt that Sri Madhva was born or became a Sanyasi in a certain Vilambi, and that his departure was in a certain Pingala. The question is, which Vilami and which Pingala?

Vilambi fell in	1040 Saka (1118 A.D.)
	1100 Saka (1178 A.D.)
	1160 Saka (1238 A.D.)
Pingala fell in	1119 Saka (1197 A.D.)
	1179 Saka (1258 A.D.)
	1239 Saka (1317 A.D.)

Of these, by pushing forward the date of the Matam List by 120 years or two cycles, if we take the Pingala, viz. 1317 A.D. as the date of the Guru's departure, it fits in exactly with Narahari Theertha's history and Akshobhya Theertha's episode as a contemporary of Vidyaranya and Vedanta Desika.

It seems impossible at this distance of time and with the somewhat meagre materials available, to fix the period with certainty. In making a conjecture, there seems no good reason to reject Pingala 1317 A.D., as the probable date of the Guru's departure. Mr. Subba Rao thinks that if Narahari Theertha resigned the Regency in 1203 Saka (or 1281 A.D.) he must have lived fifty three years after that period, since he became Pontiff in the next Rakthakshi which is 1324 A.D., and died, Srimuka 1333 A.D. The fallacy in this reasoning is that he resigned the Regency in 1203 Saka. His inscriptions carry him at least till 1215 Saka. It is impossible to say in what year he resigned and in what year he turned up with the images of Rama and Sita before Sri Madhva. There is no ground for the belief that whether he resigned or not in 1281 A.D. he could not have lived 53 years after 1281 A.D.

Mr. Subba Rao lays some stress on Vidyaranya quoting from Jaya Theertha's commentaries. He thinks that an interval of 100 years at least, should have elapsed before the new system could have become sufficiently important for a notice and review in Vidyaranya's "Sarva Darsana Sangraha." This is pure conjecture based on very feeble legs. Akshobhya and his disciple Jaya Theertha were contemporaries of Vidyaranya. A hot controversy had occurred. Vidyaranya had come face to face with the new faith and struggled to arrest its growing popularity. His Guru

Padma Theertha, and the latter's Guru, Vidya Sankara himself had tried hard to achieve the same end. Therefore Vidyaranya had had occasion to study the Texts of the Poorna Pragna System, for he had rubbed shoulders with Akshobhya. Hence, it is no wonder that he quotes from Jaya Theertha's works, contemporary as the latter was.

Now a word about the internal evidence, if any, in Madhva Vijia. In Chapter X, it is stated that Sri Madhva met a Maharashtra King, Iswara Deva, who tried to force the Guru to do some personal service. Who is this Iswara Deva of the Maharashtra country? One Mahadeva was King of Deogiri, Daulatabad, from A.D. 1260 to 1271. This was a Yadava King who held sway sometime before the Mahomedan Bhamini Kingdom overthrew that dynasty in A.D. 1347. The list of sovereigns contains no Iswara Deva during the period which Mr. Subba Rao assigns to Sri Madhva.

I had the advantage of discussing the point in May 1908 at Udupi with the leading Pandits of the place in the presence of His Holiness, the Swami of Adhamar Mutt. In the course of the discussion, other fantastic dates were also mentioned, as culled from Vayu Purana, and from another unknown source. These consisted of Sanskrit verses which professed to name the exact date of the Acharya's birth and Sanyasa. In the Vayu Purana, *7th Magha Sudha of Vilambi*, said to have been a Sunday, was recorded as the birth-day. The verses referred to as from the unknown source, fixed *Vijia Dasami of a Vilambi*, said to have been a Wednesday, as the birth-day. In these, it was stated that Sri Madhva had his upanayana in the fifth year and sanyasa in the eleventh. It was further recorded that Sri Madhva went on his

first tour to Badari seven years after his renunciation. It was a pity that the authority on which all this information was based was declared unknown. It was an anonymous extract.

A copy of the statement which Mr. Buchanan refers to as having been made to him in 1799 A.D. was also available. This paper fixed 1199 A.D. as the true date. On examination, it was found that it quoted no authority (Pramana) as its basis.

On a consideration of all the reasons *pro* and *con*, His Holiness the Swami of Adhamar Mutt and the Pandits were of opinion that the date suggested by, and in conformity to, the inscriptions was the most acceptable of all.

CHAPTER IV.

CHILDHOOD.

It is a sport of the Gods that when they choose to be born among men, they behave like men, not forgetting or omitting to display even the faults and foibles of humanity, at times. Sri Madhva was no exception to this rule of the Gods. He appeared as a human infant, wept aloud, hungered for milk, and mimicked all the frolics of new-born babies.

After the usual period of ten days during which the confinement room was strictly private, the ceremony of name-giving was celebrated with considerable *eclat*, the child being named 'Vasudeva'. It is not improbable that one of the names of Sri Krishna was advisedly chosen. Hindus dote on Sri Krishna with peculiar fondness, and love to call a

pet child by that beloved name. To parents who have longed ardenly for issue, and attained their wish at last, Sri Krishna is a name of peculiar endearment, for in that word, is condensed a whole volume of tenderness.

It is also probable that Madhyageha being a Pandit of erudion, did not overlook the circumstance that 'Vasudeva' in one of its etymological imports, connotes God Vayu of Universal Knowledge, and therefore, that the designation was no more than what the child literally deserved.

Madhyageha and his wife never felt themselves sufficiently thankful to Anantheswara for the priceless treasure they had obtained. They deemed it one of their very first duties to take the baby to the temple and pay respects to the deity. They brooked not a moment's delay beyond what was absolutely necessary for the health of the mother.

As soon as the mother was fit, no time was lost in arranging a trip to Udupi for the purpose. A large party of friends and relations accompanied Madhyageha on this occasion. The temple was reached, and the offerings of Pooja were duly submitted. When the party started from Udupi on the return journey, it was evidently late in the evening.

Though the distance to Pajakakshetra is not great, acccording to modern notions, the way lies through a trackless jungle. For miles around, there is no cart-track even now. The travellers therefore had to perform the journey on foot, right through. The difficulties of a nocturnal walk through the winding ups and downs of a rugged forest, were materially added to, by the terrors of superstition.

When the men, women, and children were passing through the thickets of a certain spot, it was the unearthly hour of midnight. It is said that an evil spirit haunting the woods obstructed their progress. It announced through the lips of one 'possessed', that they had incurred a great risk by attempting to pass through such a jungle at such a belated hour, and that if the child were not what he was *viz.*, a divine *avatar*, it (the demon), would have made short work of the baby. The incident caused every one to shiver with fright. They blamed themselves for their temerity in incurring such a risk. But there was a silver lining to the clouds. The demon was evidently afraid of the child. It said that 'Vasudeva' was no ordinary mortal. Hence their darling was incapable of being hurt. This was indeed joyful news. The party hastened their steps and reached their village in safety, full of thankfulness to God for the narrow escape they had had from a great danger.

Time wore on. Vasudeva grew, day by day, a veritable picture of glowing health and cheer. The ailments that so often render babyhood miserable, were quite unkown in his case. The extraordinary good looks of the little boy gave early promise of the charming man that was going to be. Learned men saw in the child, glimpses of all the thirty-two attributes that the sacred books speak of as making up the perfection of the human form. There was on the curly forehead, a charm that was destined, in the fulness of years, to grow into a personal magnetism which was simply irresistible. Every day gave proofs of an intellectual precocity that was quite marvellous. People clapped their hands, and exclaimed in surprise that they had seen children enough, but none like this precocious darling.

The unusual health and strength of Vasudeva is illustrated by an incident that occurred when he was not more than a year old. One day, his mother had to leave him at home and go somewhere to attend to an urgent duty. She left Vasudeva in charge of his elder sister, with strict injunctions to look after him with the utmost attention and care. As soon as the fond mother turned her back on him, and was beyond earshot, he began to cry. The girl tried her best to soothe him, in vain. He set up such a big howl that all her efforts proved of no avail. Finding that there was no possibility of making him calm down, she took him to a quantity of boiled horsegram, and allowed him to eat it. Vasudeva took to it with a greedy appetite and refused to desist until the whole quantity was exhausted. It was far larger in quantity than a bullock could digest. But he was not happy till he had consumed every grain of the heap, and stopped howling only after the hearty repast was fully over.

Shortly after this extraordinary dinner, the mother returned home and learned what had happened. Her dismay could be better imagined than described. She rebuked the girl for her folly, accused herself of neglect, and ended by fretting and foaming beyond measure. But Vasudeva was quite cheerful, and there was nothing at all the matter with him. He kept playing about as if nothing had happened. One day passed after another, and yet no signs of the apprehended indigestion appeared at all.

Another incident, equally remarkable, is related of Vasudeva, as having occurred about the same time. It furnishes a demonstration of the great pluck and daring that formed a marked feature in the later life of the Master. One day, the boy suddenly disappeared from home. Nobody had noticed him and none

could trace him out. The parents were naturally distracted, and went about searching. The villagers joined in the search, and looked for him in every direction. Their quest was fruitless for hours. At last, they met the child coming along merrily, hanging from the tail of an intractable bull. On his countenance, there was no fear and no fatigue. The truth was, he had set out with the bull in the morning, by holding to its tail, and had held on thus all day long in the course of its wild peregrinations.

When the searching party came upon this novel scene, a ferocious bull with a puny boy suspended to the tail, their first thought was one of concern and alarm. But a closer view dispelled anxiety, as Vasudeva was beaming with smiles, and was evidently enjoying the fun. They caught hold of him, hugged him to their bosoms, and brought him home recounting his exploit, on the way, to the villagers.

At this time, Vasudeva was moving about freely on hands and knees. In due course, he picked up walking. It was then hard to control him in his activities and wanderings. An open country lay before him with the hill and the temple on the top, and virgin forest everywhere. Vasudeva had unbounded energy and vigour, which he availed himself of, for restless activity. Not that he gave trouble to anybody or did mischief by indulging in harmful pranks. He was always roaming about, ever active and genial, and full of animal spirits.

By his own observation, and by perpetual enquiring which included a close cross examination such as precocious childern alone are capable of, he seemed to be making wonderful progress in 'nature study', having his wits keenly alive to note every phenomenon and

study every incident that he came in contact with. While thus behaving, and getting on like a human mortal, and showing himself a prodigy at times, Vasudeva startled the village, one day, by a miracle as if intended to remind the people who he was. The picture overleaf gives a rough idea of this episode.

It has already been mentioned that Madhyageha Bhatta suffered occasional embarrassments from want of money. On one of these occasions, a persistent creditor came to his house and sat 'Dharna' at his door. It was a common practice in India for creditors to sit at the door of the debtor, and refuse to move until the debt was repaid. The creditor would take no food or drink, nor would he allow the debtor to do so or go about his business. With the Sowcar thus fasting at the door, it was out of the question for the debtor to take his food and be merry. No Hindu is capable of such a flagrant violation of hospitality. Hence, compelled by the creditor and compelled by the laws of hospitality ingrained in his nature, the debtor would promptly repay, by resorting to some desperate resource. This kind of collecting debts, known as 'Dharna' became obsolete after the Penal Code and the Civil Courts Act took firm root in this country. Instances of Dharna in a mild form are not still unknown in remote and out-of-the-way corners. It was a coercive process that was more speedy and effectual than decrees and executions.

Madhyageha happened to be entangled in a difficulty of this kind. His Sowcar was a great dunner. It was the hour for his ablutions and dinner, but the 'Dharna' pressed on him and he could not escape from his creditor. He could think of no resources immediately available to get him out of the scrape. When

No 1.

"He received the payment, delighted beyond measure"—P. 39.

he was thus in a fix and racking his brain for a solution of the difficulty, Vasudeva came bounding up to him in blissful ignorance and innocence, and asked him (Madhyageha) to go in for dinner as it was late already. Madhyageha evaded the child by some pretext or other, but the intelligent Vasudeva was not to be brushed aside so lightly. He pressed his father again and again, until at last the latter had to address the child, saying, "Dear. I owe money to this creditor as the price of a bullock bought of him, and he insists on immediate payment; you better go and have your meals. I shall take my food latter on, after he is satisfied."

Vasudeva left his father, realising the situation, and promptly made up his mind how to act. He went round the house and beckoned to the Sowcar to go with him. The Sowcar did so. Whoever set eyes on Vasudeva's face was powerless to resist his magnetism They went to a shaded place beyond the tank now known as Vasudeva Theertha, and stood under a big tree. Vasudeva picked up in the hollow of both hands joined together, a quantity of tamarind seeds, and poured them into the Sowcar's hands. At first, the Sowcar probably took it as fun, and was not disinclined to have a little sport with the radiant boy. To his unutterable surprise, he observed that the seeds had turned out to be coins amounting to a full discharge of the dues He received the payment, delighted beyond measure. Vasudeva quickly left the scene, and ran home unseen by his father. The Sowcar returned to Madhygeha and told him that he was free, because the boy had repaid the debt in full.

The news of this event evidently created a profound impression at the time. The exact spot where

it occured, is, even now, pointed out to gilgrims with reverence.

There are of course various shades of opinion regarding miracles in general, and this one in particular. Some people consign it to the limbo of the mythical Madhva, and would give it no room in a history of the Guru's life. They relegate everything supernatural to the region of fiction, and this one too, consistently enough. Others think that even if the story be an exaggeration in the form in which it is presented, there must be a foundation at the bottom, and a substratum of truth underneath. They try hard to separate the underlying fact from the suspected overgrowth of fiction. They find it difficult to brush aside, as wholly fictitious, a story narrated by the earliest authentic chronicle on the subject, and suppoted by a chain of unbroken and unimpeachable tradition. Is it possible that Madhyageha had no debt at all to pay, or that he paid it out of his own resources, and invented a story to glorify his son! Is it possible as a third alternative that Pandit Narayana created the fiction out of his head, and if so, why did he do so? These are hard nuts to crack.

There is another section of people, the srictly orthodox, who believe in every word of the narration. These refuse to judge of Avatara Purushas, such as Sri Madhva was, by the rules and precedents of ordinary mundane life.

It is out of the question to attempt any controversy or argument with the Positivists and Scientists who will listen to nothing beyond the limitted horizon of human consciousness and experiences, and who insist on every assertion being mathematically demonstrated. They are perfectly right and

reasonable in their attitude. No science can progress unless this principle and procedure is firmly adhered to, as fundamental.

But the purview of religion and that of philosophy is broader and more comprehensive. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in science strictly so-called. In the life of religious and moral leaders, scores of striking incidents are narrated. In the life of Sri Sankara, Sri Ramanuja, and Sri Madhva, there are numerous episodes of this nature. The orthodox members of each sect accept the miracles of their own Guru as literally true, and reject those of other Gurus, as figments of imagination. Occultism which seems to be the fashionable name and garb for old orthodoxy to assume, if it cares for a hearing, is paving the way for the acceptance of many a singular phenomenon beyond the pale of gazetted text-books of science.

CHAPTER V.

Boyhood up to Upanayana.

The town of Udupi is a sea-port of the Arabian Sea which forms the western boundary of Southern India. Most of the places with which Sri Madhva's history is concerned in South Canara, are coast-towns of the Arabian Sea. The trunk road from Malabar runs right through, to Condapoor, touching Kasargod, Kumbla, Manjeshwar, Ullal, Mangalore, Udupi, and other places. This road runs parallel to the sea-shore and at such a distance of it, as to command a view of the sea, in most places.

For a clear understanding of the episode related below, it is necessary to explain, a little, the

geography of the villages adjoining Udupi. From the sea-shore to Udupi is a distance roughly of about three miles from west to east. Within a mile from Udupi, there is a village known as Bannanje or Thalekooda, with a Siva temple adjoining the modern public road. As we proceed to the west, to a distance of a mile or so, we reach the village of Koduvooru, where there is an ancient and somewhat imposing Devasom dedicated to Sankara-Narayana. The popular name of this deity is Kanangi or Kanana Devata, God of the Forest. Very probably, the surrounding country was a dense forest in the old days, and the deity of the temple, was the presiding God of the forest. There is now a pretty settlement of Brahmins forming an Agraharam with two rows of neat houses separated by a broad street leading to the big gate-way of the temple.

Just to the east of the Kanana Devata, a narrow road runs to the north, parallel to the Condapoor-road already mentioned. Of the villages reached by this path, I may mention Nediyooru situated about five or six miles north of Udupi. Neyampalli is another village in the neighbourhood, about three miles from Udupi, on the Condapoor road.

Madhyageha's wife, Vedavati, had her parents' house very probably in Neyampalli or Nediyooru. She certainly had relations in both. The occasions for visiting her relations in these two villages, seem to have been frequent, as is usual in village life. For, villagers, as a rule, set special store by a punctilious observance of social duties, and seldom tolerate a breach, without sufficient cause. In Nediyooru, a great festivity took place once, for which Madhyageha and his wife had been invited. They attended the

festivity with their children including, of course, boy Vasudeva. He was probably about three years old, at this time, well able to walk.

When the festivity was in progress, there was great bustle, and considerable confusion, as the result of numerous guests having arrived, and everybody being busy unpacking and settling down in some accomodation hastily provided. There was, of course, endless receiving and greeting, going on between friends and relations that met presumably after separations of longer or shorter duration. When Madhyageha and his wife were thus engaged, Vasudeva had been probably entrusted to his elder sister or had been neglected altogether. Taking advantage of the prevailing confusion, he slipped unnoticed from the festive house, and took the narrow road leading southwards to Kanana Devata in Koduvooru. He had to walk a mile or two, but he did not mind. Arriving at this temple, he boldly entered the shrine as well as the sanctum sanctorum, and offered worship to Vishnu. After staying sometime in this pagoda, he started from there, and proceeded towards Udupi, instead of retracing his steps homeward. On his way to Udupi, he stopped at the temple of Bannanje, and worshipped Hari, the indweller of the Lingam therein. This over, he marched dauntlessly onward to the 'Chandra Mouleswara' temple of Udupi, and thence to that of Ananteswara.

Meanwhile, the festivity having engaged all the attention of Madhyageha and his wife, for a time, they did not discover the absence of Vasudeva. Suddenly, they bethought themselves of the missing boy, and began to search for him. They heartily cursed themselves for their folly in having neglected him, but no

amount of worry and vexation was of any avail, under the circumstances. The guests that had gathered, and all the other people interested in Madhyageha, were apprised of what had occurred. Every one felt it as a personal loss, inasmuchas Vasudeva was a general favourite. The news passed from mouth to mouth, that the glorious boy of Pajakakshetra was missing. The proceedings of the feast were suspended, and the people searched for Vasudeva in every direction.

After a long search, one of the parties came upon the urchin just emerging from the temple of Ananteswara in Udupi. He had performed what was almost a miracle for his age. They caught hold of the little vagabond and questioned him. There he stood, radiant and cheerful, his face beaming with happiness and sunny with rippling smiles. They asked him "Darling. You are so young. Who escorted you on this perilous journey?" The reply given was characteristic. He responded gloriously in a joyous vein. "Why, Sankara-Narayana escorted me to Bannanjey. Sri Hari of that temple guided my steps to the east temple of Udupi yonder, and that deity brought me hither. I travelled not alone and unescorted." The earnestness with which the boy spoke, conveyed the assurance, that an Invisible Providence had taken shape and led the child from place to place. "Who knows", the men would have exclaimed, "but that it may be true!" The boy did not look as if he had lost the way or suffered any difficulty or trouble in his rambles. He felt happy as if his father or mother had walked him quietly, holding his fingers. When the question was put to him, the reply came with readiness. On his part, there was no consciousness of having done wrong. He looked as if he had behaved in the

most natural manner, and had innocently followed the steps of an elderly guide.

The men were at their wits' end to realise what had happened in fact. Some of them indulged in fantastic conjectures. Others pondered over the words of the boy and tried to fathom their true significance. Every one put his own interpretation, in accordance with his own ideas of, and beliefs in, supernatural happenings.

Vasudeva was soon restored to his parents, and the suspended animation of the festivity gave room for redoubled joy.

It is said by some critics, that this story of Sri Madhva's childhood-flight to temples, bears a resemblance to an anecdote of the same kind found in the Bible. It is therefore argued that this story proves the influence of Christianity on the teachings of Sri Madhva. To my mind, the argument is somewhat difficult to follow. The question is whether Sri Madhva took any leaf from Christian books in formulating his views of religion and philosophy. The answer depends on an examination of his teachings as recorded in his works. Sri Madhva left no autobiography recounting his boyhood-flight to the temple as an exploit of his. If anybody invented the tale, it must be his biographer Narayana Pandit. If Sri Madhva did not concoct the episode, how can it serve as a peg on which to hang an argument to the effect that he committed plagiarism of Christian tenets and doctrines. As for Pandit Narayana having come under Christian influence, there is no evidence whatsoever of any sort or kind in support of it. He must have possessed a highly diseased intellect to pitch upon a tale of this kind to borrow for the purpose of

enhancing Sri Madhva's glory. What proof is there to show that the Pandit ever came under Christian influence or possessed any acquaintance with its teachings? Such a surmise is so baseless as not to be a reasonable conjecture.

To return from the digression, the parents of Vasudeva felt very thankfal to God for the restoration of the boy. It is no exaggeration to say that they loved their son with all their heart and with all their soul. Vasudeva remained entwined in and among the tendrils of their heart, so intimately and so thoroughly, that to be parted from him meant plucking the heart itself from their body.

Having stayed in Nediyooru as long as social etiquette required, they returned home with Vasudeva. From this time forward, it was becoming evident that Vadudeva was developing a peculiar partiality to temples and solitudes. While he largely indulged in childish sports and pranks appropriate to his age, those who watched him closely, observed that he took long rambles among the Vimanagiri rocks, and rejoiced to be left alone in the temple of Durga. He evinced a decided leaning towards devotional worship even at this tender age. He was fond of withdrawing himself from home and children's company, and repaired to places of sanctity and worship. He selected the slopes of the hill, even as resorts for play and games. He had no objection to be left alone, as if Goddess Durga herself was sufficient company to be engaged with in play.

Vasudeva's parents were not shrewd enough to observe this particular tendency. They let him have pretty much his own way as to his likes and dislikes.

and allowed no solicitude to tamper with or disturb the full measure of the happiness they enjoyed.

In this state of unalloyed bliss, time passed without anybody noticing its flight. No incident occurred for a time worthy of note. Day by day, Vasudeva proved by his remarkable intelligence, that he was qualified to begin literary studies, earlier than other children of average capacity. Madhyageha perceived the force of his claim and fixed an early day for initiating Vasudeva into the mysteries of the alphabet.

When the day arrived, Madhyageha's house was the scene of considerable bustle, owing to the festivity marking the occasion. Presumably, the inevitable gathering of kith and kin flocked to his house to see the urchin introduced into the world of the literate. In well-to-do society, Aksharabhyasam, i.e., commencement of education, is a gala occasion, in which presents are made to the boy, and social amenities exchanged. When the assembly had gathered in Madhyageha's house according to etiquette, mantras were recited and ceremonies were performed, after which, Vasudeva clad in becoming attire after a bath, received his first lesson in the O,Na,Ma, of the Sanskrit alphabet.

The commencement once made, every day showed strides of progress. A capacity to learn off anything new without effort, was soon manifest. Vasudeva allowed himself to be taught only once and no more. He tolerated no repetition or revision, for, that was superfluous. Whenever his father tried to go over trodden ground, he protested and reproduced the lesson in question from his memory, so as to convince Madhyageha, that he need spare himself the trouble.

To avert the influence of evil-eyes, Madhyageha selected some lonely place for tuition and taught his son in secret.

The extent to which Vasudeva mastered and assimilated his father's lessons, soon came to be tested by an incident at Neyampalli. It happened that Vasudeva and his mother paid a visit to a relation in this village on the occasion of a marriage. Madhyageha had stayed behind in Pajakakshetra. At Neyampalli, a learned man whose name was Siva, and family-designation Madikullaya, (Dhoutapatod-bhava) used to read and interpret Puranic passages to a large audience. It chanced that Vasudeva attended the Puranic exposition, probably along with his mother. When a difficult passage was being elucid-ated, Siva committed a mistake. Vasudeva promptly threw in a word to correct him, to the astonishment of the assembly. He had spotted the error, and made the correction, before any elderly person had noticed the mistake. The boy's words were sensible, his explanation was lucid and illuminating, and his bearing dignified and noble. Every eye was turned towards him, and most eyes were suffused with tears of tenderness. When the party broke up and he left the place, he was the observed of all observers. This was an incident resembling a miniature edition of those dialectical triumphs that were soon to become the distinguishing feature of his great future.

When Vasudeva returned to his father, he re-counted to him his little triumph, and asked him in guileless innocence, whether Siva had not gone wrong. Madhyageha listened with attention, and allowed that Siva had committed a blunder.

Another incident of the same character is reported to have occurred in Pajakakshetra itself. This time, it

was Madhyageha himself, that was explaining a Purana to a large gathering. Vasudeva sat listening with attention, carefully following the thread of the discourse. In the course of the exposition, it happened that Madhyageha passed over the word "Likucha" that occured in the context, and failed to explain its meaning. Vasudeva quietly and respectfully drew his father's attention to the omission, and gave out the appropriate exposition himself. The behaviour of Vasudeva was striking in this instance. There was no trace or tinge of egotism or boast, either in his tone, or his demeanour. His manner was so charmingly respectful, that his interruption was greatly appreciated and applauded, instead of being resented. The people in the assembly were surprised and delighted to see that the tiny Vasudeva had picked up so much of Sanskrit as to subject the discourses of eminent Pandits to a critical scrutiny. Those who have read Lord Macaulay's life, will not set aside these anecdotes of the boy-prodigy, as altogether improbable. It is said of Thomas Babington Macaulay that "From infancy he showed that insatiable thirst for knowledge, that prodigious tenacity of memory, that talent for phrase-making, which were subsequently the delight and envy of his contemporaries." It is recorded of him that he wrote a compendium of Universal History at the age of seven, besides composing three cantoes of the "Battle of the Cheviots" in imitation of Sir Walter Scott.

For some reason rather difficult to fathom, people are disposed to twirl their lips in incredulity and derision, when a quasi-miraculous story is related of Sri Madhva, or other great personages of India, while they swallow without demur, any tale concern-

ing the celebrities of English Literature, however extravagant it may seem, in relation to average standards. Speaking humanly even, Sri Madhva is one that has left a greater imprint on the sands of time than Macaulay, for it is given to very few heroes to strike out into original paths of religious thought. Such however is the prevailing partiality and prejudice, that, while literateurs who are only eminent phrase-makers pass for geniuses, leaders and founders of systems who build anicuts across the streams of customary thought, and divert them to flow into new channels, so as to fertilize unexplored fields of religious literature, are very tardily allowed the measure of appreciation justly due to their leadership.

CHAPTER VI

Upanayana and Early Studies.

The ceremony of Upanayana at which every Brahmin Boy is invested, at about the 8th year of his age, with the triple cord, and introduced to Vedic studies, is a turning point of his life. The reverence with which this function used to be regarded, has waned only since the popularity of English Colleges in the nineteenth century. Of the sixteen ceremonies enjoined for a Brahmin and performed (more or less mechanically in the present age), Upanayana is the crowning one, to which the utmost spiritual importance is justly due. For, this function denotes the landmark by which he who was a Brahmana by the mere courtesy of birth, becomes a Brahmana in the true sense, through a process of spiritual regeneration. "Brahmana" denotes a "Knower of Brahman" iterally, and no person is truly entitled to that

distinction, unless and until he has acquired true spiritual knowledge. The necessary initiation takes place at Upanayana, the spiritual teacher who may be the boy's father or any qualified Guru, leading the boy unto the threshold of sacred studies and ushering him into the region of spiritual culture. This is the mile-stone marking off the inception of Brahmacharya, the first of the four *asramas* or stages into which the Hindu Law divides the life of a Brahmana. A Brahmacharin is expected to give up most of his previous habits and practices, and start on a new career in which discipline and study are the ruling principles of his life. At Upanayana, he submits to the yoke of religious Law, and takes vows of allegiance and loyalty thereto. The triple cord, symbolizing in a sense, body, speech, and mind, knotted together and reduced to control, is the emblem with which he is invested in token of his new position, and this, he wears for life, unless he enters the ascetic order later on.

The reader may feel tempted to enquire if the Brahmana and the Brahmacharin is a living entity in the twentieth century, in the sense that those words convey etymologically. The sad confession has to be made that he is a rare entity, and is seldom met with as a true chip of the old block. The exigencies of modern life, the stress of Western ideas and ideals, the keen scramble for bread, the struggle and competition in which the survival of the fittest alone is the law, have made it impossible for the old order of things to continue in pristine purity. Barring honorable exceptions, it must be admitted that several of our ancient customs, habits, practices, and observances, survive to this day, as mere fossils of memory. Every Dwija-boy passes through Upanayana even now. In what percentage of cases can it be said that

the spiritual significance of the ceremony is realized? Not one in a thousand. The occasion is availed of for festivities and *tamasha*, and money is spent lavishly, very often in excess of one's means, on pandals and processions. But this is not as it should be.

Most Brahmana boys have their Upanayana in the eighth year of their age. It is not orthodox to cross this limit. Having regard to Vasudeva's special qualifications, Madhyageha was too impatient to wait so long. Vasudeva was barely five years old when an auspicious day was fixed for the purpose. The investiture with the triple cord, took place with considerable solemnity, as well as the great initiation. The boy was taught the sacred OM and Gayatri—the mantram of mantrams regarded as the essence of the Vedas. It is the pithy prayer that every Brahmana repeats or is expected to repeat again and again many a time every day. Ostensibly, it is an address to the Sun. But it is really a supplication to the in-dweller of the Sun, the great Surya-Narayana, for spiritual light. Gayatri is the Brahmana's motto of "Light, more light", a motto that characteristically sums up all his aspirations into a pursuit of knowledge. Pranava and Gayatri constitute the very breath of his spiritual respiration, and no vow or penance, no religious ceremony or function, is possible without these being uttered over and over again, elderly people resorting to rosary beads to count the number of repetitions.

Thus Vasudeva was ushered very early into the new phase of life, for which divinity itself had marked him out. In this instance at least, it was not an empty farce of the Purohit mumbling a jargon, and the boy together with his parents passing mechanically through a dumbshow of gestures to the bidding of the priest.

Madhyageha was a learned man, and his boy was a genius. They both earnestly followed the details of the ritual in its exoteric and esoteric sense, and realised, in a full measure, the allegorical import of every observance connected with Sandhyavandana and Agnihotra.

Vasudeva was a glorious beauty. Whoever set eyes on him, felt them riveted to his figure, by an indescribable fascination. The way in which the little sage took to his new duties, the enthusiasm which he displayed, the radiance of new light that so overspread his face and features as to add fresh glory to the charms of his natural beauty and grace, are spoken of in glowing terms as the striking traits of an attractiveness almost hypnotic in character.

Those who have visited Pajakakshetra know that on the way leading from Madhyageha's house to the Durga temple on the hill-top, an enclosure of rough stones is drawn attention to, as the spot where our hero killed a gigantic serpent. It is believed that the Asura known as Maniman in Mahabharata, dwelt in the woods as a mighty snake. Soon after the Upanayana, Vasudeva encountered this ferocious reptile in the course of his rambles. He had not strayed away far from home, when the serpent that had been dwelling in the thickets and bushes of the hill-slope pounced upon him with fury, and attacked him with his poisoned fangs. The onslaught was both quick and fierce. But Vasudeva was equal to the emergency. Cool and courageous, he received the attack with perfect composure, and crushed the serpent's hood with his powerful toe.

Vasudeva was now a boy of tender years. The pluck and daring he evinced was such as to do credit to

a warrior. The whole village was bestirred by unusual sensation, on receipt of the news. Vasudeva had been attacked by a terrible snake. People were ready to faint, to hear of it. The sequel relieved them by the announcement that he had been victorious. They rushed to the spot and found a mighty snake with its hood crushed into paste. They could hardly believe their eyes at first, but the plain truth was there, beyond the pale of speculation, controversy, or conjecture.

That the memory of the incident is still green, and that the spot is still preserved sacred within a rude enclosure, are fair proofs of an unusual occurrence. Living in the midst of hills and dales, and moving constantly among serpents and wild animals, it is very unlikely that the villagers accustomed to forest life, would have gone into hysterics over a mere trifle.

This day, Vasudeva did not return home in the usual time, having been detained at the Manimantha-spot by one cause after another, including, probably, among others, the pressing inquisitiveness of the gathering crowd. His mother had been expecting him for some time, and felt anxious at his prolonged absence. Evidently, she had not heard the news. Her maternal instinct scented mishap and made her restless. In a fit of unrest, she called to Vasudeva loudly by his name, in the hope that he might be in the neighbourhood, and turn up in response. And sure enough he did, in a twinkle. In order to effect his purpose, they say that Vasudeva took a 'long jump' from where he was to the front of his house, and presented himself before his mother. This again was a feat that Hanuman alone could have accomplished. He began the day's proceedings by performing a feat

of Bheemasena, by crushing a great Rakshasa with easy non-chalance. He ended the miracle by a wonderful jump. It is said, that the rocky ground on which he set his feet thus with great velocity and force, became indented by his footprints. Over this monument, now stands a temple to signalise the event.

It is a divine Maya that Avatara-purushas perform miracles before the very eyes of people, but these leave no enduring impression. Sri Krishna disclosed himself to Devaki and Vasudeva as soon as he was born. At the moment, they adored him as God incarnate. They were bidden to take him through barred doors and the flooding Jumna. A series of miracles occurred before their eyes. But lo! the impression vanished, soon after. Yesoda was convinced that the babe Krishna was no other than the Almighty holding the Universe in His stomach. When Sri Krishna shut up his mouth, Yasoda got into the old groove of ignorance, and forgot all about the wonderful scene that she had witnessed. Time after time, Sri Krishna furnished proofs of his godhead, but the conviction brought about was ephemeral, except in the minds of seers and sages. At other times, Sri Krishna laughed and wept like other children, and displayed joys and griefs over toys and trifles. He was sent to learn literary lessons from a teacher, and there he was, sitting at the Guru's feet, and meekly conning the drudgery. He was told off to hew wood in the jungle, and bring a bundle of fuel for the hearth of the Guru's household. He submitted quietly to the ordeal, and spent hours, if not days, in the thickening darkness of a forest, engaged along with a school mate, in hewing away logs of timber. This was the Lord's Maya.

Equally mysterious are the ways of the Lord's Bhaktas descending on Earth to fulfil His work.

They give notice at times of who and what they are. But the warning passes away like a flash of lightning, disapears in the prevailing gloom, and hardly leaves a trace even in memory. Ordinarily, they follow the human routine of work and seem to share the common joys and sorrows incidental to, and making up the lot of, human life.

Judged as a common boy whose initiation as a Dwija had taken place, Vasudeva was bound to be sent to school. So he was packed off to a village school close by. The schoolmaster took charge of Vasudeva's education from this period up to the time when Vasudeva turned his thought to renunciation. Sriman Madhva Vijia does not say for how many years Vasudeva underwent the *status pupillari.* We are left to conjecture the duration, as best we may. It could not have been a very short period, for, the course of study embraced, besides Poetic literature, the Nyaya and Vedangas, in their most comprehensive purview. The schoolmaster was of Poogavana (Thotam Thillaya in the Vernacular) descent. He was a learned Brahman whose knowledge of the Upanishads was of no mean order. He was a fairly popular teacher, as may be gathered from the circumstance that his classes were numerously attended. One of the pupils in this school, was the schoolmaster's son himself, with whom Vasudeva contracted a lasting friendship that seems to have continued throughout his life.

It will be incorrect to call the institution in which Vasudeva received his education after his Upanayana, a village school in the strict sense. For, this conveys the idea of school-fees, grants, salaries and inspections, that ear-mark such a school now-a-days. Before the establishment of village primary schools in the 19th

was driven thus to desperation, fell at his son's feet and begged him to change his mind. This was an unfortunate, ill-omened, move. Vasudeva retorted to him, saying, that this prostration spontaneously resorted to by one so senior in age, a position admissible only if the younger person was an ascetic, simply confirmed his resolve by being an ominous prediction of what was to be.

Madhyageha was silenced by this repartee, as his wits had deserted him. He retraced his way home, quite woe-be-gone and distracted by the thought that his dear son whose separation he could not brook for an hour, the ideal of his dreams and hopes, was to be virtually lost to him. His despair can be imagined, if we recall to mind Dasaratha's grief when Viswamitra took away Sri Ramachandra, not yet sixteen years old, to fight the Asuras in the woods. His despair is conceivable when we read of how Sri Ramachandra's departure at the instance of Kaikeyi snapped the bonds of Dasaratha's life and sent him to a premature grave.

If the reader is not satisfied with such ancient anecdotes, and insists on modern examples, I may refer him, if he pardons the sacrilege, to instances of young men decoyed by the Christian Missionary, leaving behind them a desolate grief-striken home. The comparison is misleading, inasmuchas Achuta Preksha was not responsible for Vasudeva's action. It is untrue in the sense that Vasudeva violated any duties and forsook any religion. Madhyageha felt the same grief, the same despair, as the parent whose son rushes into the arms of a Christian Missionary and doggedly repels every profferred advice and reasoning.

Madhyageha recounted the occurrences to his wife, and both felt a void which was impossible to fill. He tried to endure for a time, but this was impossible. He set out again to try another chance, and make one more desperate effort. In the meantime the Guru had left Udupi, touring in the South. Vasudeva was with him in the circuit camp. Madhyageha followed in their wake and had to cross the Netravati river to overtake them. This river is about 38 miles to the south of Udupi and runs south of Mangalore and quite near this town. He crossed the river, and found his son and the ascetic, in the village of Kayooru, having their lodgings in what was known as Kuthyidi Mutt. Very animated was the conversation that ensued between the unhappy father and the resolute son. Madhyageha became furious, at one stage, and threatened to put an end to himself, if his son should have his own way. The son tore up a cloth, put it on as a sanyasin's *koupena*, and challenged his father to carry out his threat. Temper cooled a bit on both sides. Vasudeva begged of his father not to stand in the way of a meritorious action. Madhyageha then appealed to the emotional impulses of the youth, and asked him how he had the heart to forsake his old parents, circumstanced, as they were, without any other filial support to rest upon. Vasudeva was evidently moved. He promised not to enter the sacred order until a younger brother was born. Even this did not satisfy the old man. Not seeing any other way out of the difficulty, he told his son that if his (Vasudeva's) mother agreed, he might please himself. Vasudeva agreed to this, and Madhyageha left for his village. Then followed a period of suspense with mingled feelings of grief and pleasure. Madhyageha watched the progress of events, when he learned that his wife would in due course present him with further issue.

No 2.

"The son tore up a cloth, and challenged his father"—P. 66.

At last a son was born, who was to become the famous Vishnu Theertha of Subrahmanya, the founder of Sodai Mutt.

On hearing of this, Vasudeva paid a flying visit to his village Pajakakshetra to speak to his mother. He told her that he *must* have her permission to enter the holy order, and that if it was refused, she might be sure that she could never look at his face again for he would disappear altogether and become lost to the world. This proved a home-thrust. The maternal love reconciled itself to the situation, arguing that it was better to have her son before her eyes, Sanyasin as he might be, than to lose him out of sight for ever. She therefore yielded with reluctance. Vasudeva had thus the permission of both parents to carry out his resolution.

The exact age of Vasudeva when he assumed Sanyasa is a point of considerable doubt and conjecture. Some say he was barely nine years old. Others say he was 11 or 12. It is even conjectured that he was at least sixteen. Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer's 'historical sketch' puts it at 25. He deduces it on the strength of an astronomical calculation coupled with a conjecture. Sri Madhva Vijia states that shortly after becoming a Sanyasin, Poornapragna sought permission of his Guru to perform a pilgrimage to the Ganges. Achuta Preksha was unwilling to accord permission, because he could not brook a separation from his Sishya, so soon after the initiation. The anecdote goes on to say that an oracle prophesied a spiritual visit of the Goddess Ganga to a pond of Udupi in three days and said that Poornapragna need not undertake the journey just then. The announcement was that this visit of Ganga would be repeated once in twelve years,

Mr. C.N. Krishnaswamy Iyer argues that this anecdote refers to the. well-known Mahamakham festival celebrated now at Kumbhakonam and that, inasmuch-as this festivity falls when Jupiter is in Leo, such a planetary combination occurred soon after Poornapragna's entry into the holy brotherhood. After concluding that our Acharya was born in 1199 A. D. and that this anecdote postulates Jupiter in Leo, he consults an astronomical friend and pitches upon 1200 A.D., 1212 A.D., 1224 A.D., and 1236 A.D. as the years when such a position occurred. He rejects 1200 and 1212 A.D. on the ground that the Acharya was too young, and rejects 1236 A.D. also, as too late in his life. Accepting 1224 A.D. he makes him out a young man of 25 at his renunciation. Mr. Iyer admits that there is no trace of Mahamakham festivity as ever celebrated at Udupi at any time within the memory of man. Nor is there any authentic proof that Sri Madhva originated it in Kumbhakonam. So the notion of Mahamakham and Jupiter in Leo is somewhat far-fetched. The year of birth is yet far from being satisfactorily established as 1199 A.D. The grounds for rejecting this date are at least as strong as those for adopting it. If these two positions are of doubtful correctness, the date of renunciation can hardly be 1224 A.D. If a similar far-fetched conjecture may be hazarded, it may be permissible to argue likewise that Madhyageha would not have allowed his son to remain a bachelor till his 25th year. Having regard to his position in society, to his moderate affluence, to his brilliant parts, and to his matchless handsomeness, offers of marriage would indeed have been far too many, and too pressing, to resist. What is the reason, then, that induced Madyageha to continue his son in single blessedness till such a late age ? It

may be remembered that early marriages were perhaps more prevalent seven hundred years ago than now.

Assuming that the episode relating to the Ganges relates to Jupiter in Leo, one such position fell in 1248 A.D. This would be 10 or 11 years after Sri Madhva's birth, taking 1237—38 A.D. as the date on which the avatar took place. In a previous chapter discussing the date, I have shown it very probable that the Master was born in Vilambi 1237—38 A.D., and disappeared in 1317 A.D., judging from the testimony of archæological inscriptions.

An old extract of Sanskrit verses that I saw at Udupi in the possession of a Pandit, says, that Sri Madhva had his Upanayana in his fifth year and Sanyasa seven years after. Mr. Subba Rao of Salem says that the renunciation took place on the 4th Krishnapaksha of Ashada of a Vilambi year. Testimony seems strong in support of the view that Vilambi is the year of the Master's birth and not of his renunciation.

In this state of conflict, it is not possible to be dogmatic. I can find no good reason to reject the view that Vasudeva was 11 or 12 years old when he sought the highest Asrama of the Brahminical Law.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE YOUNG SANYASIN.

Prince Sidhartha forsook the throne and courted poverty out of an overpowering love for humanity. The mighty gulf between the position of his birth-right and that of his choice, furnishes the most staggering instance of altruism on record. Judged from a human

stand-point, the world is not able to show a parallel to this. He declared :—

"Because my heart
Beats with each throb of all the hearts that ache
Known and unknown, these that are mine and those
Which shall be mine, a thousand million more
Saved by the sacrifice I offer now...
"I choose
To tread its (Earth's) paths with patient stainless feet
Making its dust my bed, its loveliest wastes
My dwelling, and its meanest things my mates,
Clad in no prouder garb than outcastes wear
Fed with no meats save what the charitable
Give of their will, sheltered by no more pomp
Than the dim cave lends or the jungle bush.
This will I do, because of the woeful cry
Of pity for the sickness of the world:
Which I will heal, if healing may be found
By utmost renouncing and strong strife".

Light of Asia.

This was Sidhartha, great and fortunate, rich and dowered with health and ease, not tired of life, but glad in the freshness of its morning. He was not one that had been satiated with Love's delicious feasts, but hungry and passionate for the joys of the flesh; not one that was worn and wrinkled, sadly sage, but joyous with the sunny smiles of youth, health, and strength. He tore himself away from whatsoever was dear to his heart and chose a career of poverty and privation in order to heal the sufferings of humanity.

The altruistic sentiments, of which Sidhartha's life was an embodied expression, staggered humanity by their sublimity. They are too divine to be grasped by the ordinary run of men. The attitude of Sidhartha's selfless heroism is too high for self-absorbed mortals to gaze at and understand.

This is the history of a every great personage that has left his foot-prints on the sands of time. No greatness is possible without a dedication of self for the benefit of others, without an effacement of self in order to increase the fund of human joy, or relieve the stress of human suffering.

It is refreshing to think that India has been able to boast of sages and saints, the very breath of whose nostrils was selfless heroism. The great man in India, has never been the bounding millionaire, loaded with tons of gold and unable to get rid of it by a life of luxury. The great man in India, has not been the intellectual man who could glibly talk away in oratorical flights or turn out volumes of fantastic chaff in poetry or fiction. Here, greatness has been synonymous with goodness. We have worshipped greatness that was divine and nothing lower than that. Sidhartha was divine, because of the sympathy that he breathed. Other teachers and Messiahs were divine, because their hearts burst with overwhelming kindness for the sufferings of mankind.

The hero of the "Bodhi" tree has had his representatives and reflections in miniature from time to time, ever since he set the example. The body of Sadhoos in this country, counting only the most sincere and genuine of the lot, has never been a negligible quantity. Sadhooism or asceticism is not a bed of roses. The life of poverty and privation that they lead is so severe and so rigid that it will not be believed in, outside India. Those who have a first-hand acquaintance with it, know very well what a lofty life of self-abnegation these recluses and hermits lead. A spirit of calumny and depreciation will point to stray

instances of aberration. But these critics know not the inner life of Indian society.

The reader will pause for a moment to reflect on the tragic circumstances of Sri Madhva's entry into the holy order. The boy was not yet of an age to have become tired of life or sick of its monotony and its wickedness. He possessed all that is prized by the wordly-wise, everything that could make life worth living. He was confident of a towering genius calculated to storm any difficulties and bring the gratification of any desire within his reach. He had for parents two estimable persons who literally idolised him and lavished on him the choicest roses of the heart's tenderest love. He had suffered no griefs, no disappointments, no rebuffs, to goad him to pessimism or force him to take the fox's view of life that the grapes were too sour to be worth longing for.

Vasudeva fully realised the situation and made a deliberate choice. It was not the silver and gold of Achutapreksha that had dazzled his vision, for, of that, the Mutt could not boast much. It was not the pressure of parents, as is too often the case in similar instances, for, instead of tolerating him, they offered a stout and vigorous protest, and opposed his wish. Nor was it a case of young fancy tickled by the glamour of riches, rank, or paraphernalia.

Hence, Vasudeva's resolution, looked at in its true light, brings the conviction home that no vanity or imposture was at the bottom of it. There was no personal consideration to detract from its merits, and no suspicion of personal aggrandizement attached to it whatsoever.

There is a Divine aspect too, which the orthodox do not overlook. God had sent down this Messenger

of truth to correct the erring ways of mankind. Therefore he could ill afford to waste his years in a prolonged indulgence of boyhood pranks, or amidst the stale and insipid enjoyments of his father's home, while the great purpose of his mission remained neglected and postponed. His life was a sacred trust for the benefit of the public and he had no choice but to fulfil the trust as early as might be.

It would not have been appropriate for the Master to have adopted the house-holder's life in order to achieve the purpose of his *avatar*. The spectacle of a Grahastha apparently in the full enjoyment of sensuous pleasures, preaching renunciation as the only road to salvation, would have been a flagrant incongruity. The discrepancy between profession and practice would have marred the effect of his teachings and fallen flat on an unbelieving public. When scepticism was stalking through the land, it was necessary to give it battle with the utmost fervour. The teachers that had gone before him had bewitched the imagination by leading a life of thorough self-denial. Sri Madhva saw that, for a bloodless Reformation, a striking life of asceticism was the first and most essential condition of success.

He waited not a day more than was absolutely necessary. To keep up appearances, he had passed through the routine of fashionable education, and had seemed to be equipping himself with a sound knowledge of preliminary subjects. But he had known it all before, as the legacy of births gone by. His memory had always been well-stocked with every branch of knowledge and had needed very little of stimulus to be awakened. The condition of misguided men who had lost the way and were groping in

darkness appealed powerfully to him for succour, and his heart was too nobly responsive to be cold.

A full year of probation went by, before Achutapreksha resolved to perform the Initiation. The Sastras insist on a rigid probation of a year or more, before a Guru accepts a *chela*, and establishes a tie of spiritual sonship. The Guru is culpable if he admits any seeker into the holy order in a flippant spirit or a light-hearted frivolity, and without suitable tests imposed during probation to ascertain the worth of the novitiate. To this rule, Vasudeva submitted without demur.

Having sought the Guru at Udupi, Vasudeva had attached himself to the Mutt and performed every kind of service to win his grace and benediction. When the Guru proceeded on his tours, Vasudeva accompanied his camp. He was patiently biding the time, when his mother, who was *enciente*, should tide over the crisis and bless him god-speed as mothers alone can do. At last, when the happy news of a younger brother unshered into the world removed all obstacles from his way, he approached the Guru to terminate the probation and accept him within the pale of holy brotherhood.

It may be presumed that the Ananteswara temple put on a festive appearance on the auspicious day when Vasudeva made this entry. The eager crowd thronged at the entrance in order to occupy every inch of available space whence a view could be obtained. There was a fluter and a general consciousness that this was a memorable occasion.

The young ascetic parted with his silken tresses, donned the reddish robes of the Sanyasin, and took up the knotted wand of the Order. But the bald head

and the rude garments hardly diminished or affected the glorious lustre of his golden limbs and features. When he went round the shrine, with his bowl and staff, entered the *sanctum* of Ananteswara, and prostrated before the idol of Narayana, there was not a single eye which was not full of tears, nor was there a single throat not choked by emotion. Achutapreksha felt it the proudest moment of his life when he placed his hands on the glorious Vasudeva and blessed him in his new name of POORNA PRAGNA. The good people of Udupi felt it the most solemn spectable they had ever witnessed, when they beheld the young ascetic pass through the function with touching earnestness of manner. On the whole, every one regarded this as an epoch-making event in the humble annals of Udupi.

One is curious to know if Madhyageha was a spectator of this remarkable scene. Sriman Madhva Vijia is silent on the point. The probabilities are that he stayed away at home, avoiding what would have been to him a heart-rending spectacle. Who can say he was not right?

The Rubican was crossed at last. Sri Madhva turned a new page in his life and took to his new duties with enthusiasm. It took him hardly any time to master the routine of the new Order and faithfully pass through the proper observances. All the boyish mischief of which he had been capable, was gone at a sweep, and here he was, a veritable sage, sober and sedate, pursuing a career of study and meditation, and well-nigh commencing his campaign of crusade against faulty systems of philosophy and religion.

It was part of the old methods of education for kings to hold public assemblies from time to time, in

which it was open to any person to display his learning. Every facility was offered to new-comers to carry on academical debates with the Pandits attached to the Royal Courts. The Royal Budget was usually liberal in the matter of rewards. Kings and chieftains vied with one another to excel in patronage of this kind. They took a special pride in being regarded as liberal patrons of learning. As soon as their education was finished, learned men travelled from one end of the country to another, to attend these Sabhas of Royalty and make their mark. What took place in these Sabhas was a kind of *Viva Voce* public examination, the successful candiates being rewarded with diplomas or monetary presents.

The example of Royalty was imitated by noble men and lesser personages also. It was recognised as a duty of wealth and of affluence to set apart a large fraction of funds towards an encouragement of Sanskrit scholarship. The aristocrats of old knew not of any luxury more legitimate than this, of no purpose having a better established claim on their purse.

Every Mutt or religious institution was a patron of learning in a marked degree. The head of these corporations *sole*, was usually himself a luminary of renown. Around him, he gathered other celebrities more or less renowned in some special study or other, such as logic, grammar or Mimamsa. Frequent Sabhas were held to test the merit of distinguished visitors. No Sanyasin of old could have got on for a day, if he was not a Pandit versed in the popular branches of study. Nor could he have commanded respect unless he did everything in his power to patronise learning and scholarship.

In these intellectual *Melees*, it was the Nyaya and Vaiseshika system of logic that usually came in for the largest share of patronage. Goutama and Kanada, the founders of Indian Logic, have left works of undying reputation on syllogistic reasoning. Their works, together with commentaries, are the most authoritative treatises on Induction and Deduction. Akin to the pedantic school-men of Europe, Tharkikas were veritable marvels of intellectual acrobatics. They were great lovers of abstract ideas to express which they adopted a language of super-subtle technicalities. The result was that those who could boast of Naiyayika scholarship were invincible debaters in Sabhas. It was this branch of knowledge alone that used to pay, more than any other. They were generally able to silence and mystify any opponent, by their verbiage and subtlety.

It chanced that a great celebrity, known as Vasudeva, passed through Udupi with a large retinue, as an itinerent Pandit. He could not ignore Achutapreksha's Matt, for, the Guru was an eminent name in the world of letters. Vasudeva, therefore, naturally paid his respects at the Mutt and expected that a Sabha should be held in his honour at which he might engage somebody in controversy. He had not, however, expected to find an opponent like our Poorna Pragna to give him battle.

Udupi and the neighbourhood assembled in a huge gathering at a short notice. Sri Madhva and his Guru took their seats, like the President and Vice-President, as it were, of the assemblage. The memorable disputation began with Vasudeva selecting some theme of his own, and discussing it in all its aspects. For three days, Vasudeva went on without intermission, martialling a powerful array of arguments

in support of the position he finally took up and maintained. At length, he concluded amidst the applause of the audience. Every one wondered who would meet this giant and dare to assail his positions.

Poorna Pragna took up the gauntlet, and began to reply with equal ardour and greater cogency. It was expected that he would sum up his adversary's points briefly, so as to convince the audience that he had grasped the issues in dispute. He, therefore, re-produced Vasudeva's arguments, almost verbatim, and set forth his position lucidly before commencing his own attack. The audience listened with rapt attention, spell-bound by the music of his splendid voice, and the reverberating ring of his delivery. There was no hesitation or pause for words or thoughts. The flow was kept up like a magnificent stream. The manner and the matter of his eloquent speech was truly fascinating. It was the Master's maiden entry into the arena of dialectical contest, and the *debut* was a striking success. He got on like a veteran, and succeeded in smashing all the arguments of the boastful opponent. The signal triumph won on this occasin elicited universal applause. They cheered him again and again, and deemed him an acquisition to the ranks of learning.

It is to be remembered that in this disputation not only was Vasudeva badly beaten, but several of his companion-Pandits who had tried hard to defend his position. A diplomah of triumph was presumably passed to the young hero as a memorial of his first great triumph. We are told that this incident happened forty days after Sri Madhva's Ordination.

The marvellous feat of the young hero furnished to Achutapreksha an ocular proof of his pupil's attain-

ments. He saw that Poorna Pragna fully deserved the appellation bestowed on him, and that he had an old head on young shoulders. He was convinced that the usual course of elementary lessons in the lowest rung of the ladder could well be dispensed with in his case, and that serious studies might be commenced straight away. He perceived that Poorna Pragna's acquaintance with grammar and logic were already masterly, and felt nothing to be desired. He presumed, however, that the village school-master of Danda Theertha would not have meddled with advanced studies of philosophy. Consequently, he told Sri Madhva that they had better start with some Adwaita treatise. The pupil obeyed the Guru's behests with cheerfulness. The work known as Ishta Sidhi was chosen for instruction.

After preliminaries were gone through, the first verse was read, and Achutapreksha expatiated on its beauties and explained the express and implied import of the stanza. The pupil listened with attention to the very end. When the lecture was over, Poorna Pragna begged leave to make a few observations. He said that there were numerous flaws in the text and enumerated as many as 32 mistakes and fallacies. He proved that it was hardly worth wasting time over such a poor and faulty treatise as Ishta Sidhi.

The Guru was staggered by what he heard. His scholarship was not equal to the Herculean task of defending the ancient positions. Poorna Pragna was such a close reasoner that there was no resisting the force of his Logic. Intellectual honesty brought home the conviction that the fallacies and faults were there, such as could not be overthrown by any amount of

hair-splitting or quibbling. Thus, the pupil succeeded in sowing the first seeds of his great Protestantism.

After this, master and pupil were neither of them very enthusiastic over the progress of this particular study. Objections and diffiulties cropped up at every step, and the course was seriously impeded by the inability of the teacher to meet them.

Whenever Poorna Pragna was not engaged with his Guru or with the routines of worship and meditation, he devoted his time to Srimad Bhagavata. Some disciples used to recite this Purana in pursuance of a time-honoured usage by which a Puranic recitation had become an indispensible item of a Sanyasin's daily engagements. Poora Pragna used to sit amongst five or six readers and compare the the various readings with care and scrutiny. Amidst the material variations and divergences, he used to pitch upon the correct reading, and give excellent reasons for concluding that that alone was the author's version and no other. It looked as if intuition or previous knowledge guided his decision with unerring accuracy and without any exertion on his part. These critics subjected him to severe cross-examination. But he invariably stood the test and satisfied them that his conclusion was impregnable. The result was that those editions which had contained interpolations and manipulations so as to mangle the original, became purged of their errors, and the pristine purity of the original passages came to be restored.

Among the audience, it chanced that all were not equally convinced about the soundness of Poorna Pragna's conclusions. Conservatism sometimes regards youth itself as a crime. Some people shook their

heads and expressed their misgivings, by saying that the young ascetic was far from competent to sit in judgment over the time-honoured manuscripts. They refused to assume or presume that he did in fact possess a mastery of the work. Poorna Pragna was prepared for any test. One of the audience asked him to repeat the prose passages of the Vth Skandha of the great work. This was evidently considered a crucial test to find out the depth of his knowledge.

Without a moment's delay or hesitation, Poorna-Pragna reeled off passage after passage of the chapter in question with perfect accuracy. Nor did he desist until the eager listeners begged his pardon and expressed perfect satisfaction.

The puzzle that everybody tried to solve was, how this prodigy of a boy had time or scope to master all that he seemed to know. He seemed to be familiar with logic, with grammar, with Vedas, and with Bhagavata. Unable to solve the riddle by their own guess, they asked him point-blank, how he had managed to acquire so much proficiency within so short a span of life. The reply was promptly given that the acquisition had been made in previous births.

This, one is inclined to believe, is the true explanation of a "genius." Talent is acquired experience, not necessarily from one's ancestry, but from one's own previous experiences. It is conceivable that all the skill and knowledge gathered by the experience of a life-time is not really lost, on the dissolution of the mortal frame, but sticks to the individual soul (Jiva,) so that when he takes a re-birth, it serves as the nucleus of further acquisitions. This accounts for the great variety and diversity of intellectual and moral capabilities found among

persons whose environments, opportunities, and other circumstances are otherwise equal. It would be a pity if Providence did not provide a law to conserve the energies of a human life-time, but allowed them to run waste as soon as the physical encasement went to decay. Such a view is not in keeping with the ways of Providence, as may be inferred from other well-known laws of nature. In the case of our hero, the accumulated experiences of the past were neither latent nor dim, but constituted a living memory ever fresh and ever lucid.

CHAPTER IX.

OTHER DIALECTICAL TRIUMPHS.

When Sri Madhva chose to be Hanuman, he pulled mountains by the roots, took a 'long-jump' across the ocean, gave battle single-handed to hosts of giants, and did other marvels of stirring interest. When he chose to be Bheemasena, he performed herculean deeds of valour, that went to fill the bulk of the great Mahabharata epic. When he chose to be a plain ascetic, clad in the robes of a monk, he did wonders likewise, but these were on a different plan, and cast on a different mould, from any that he had done before.

A history that is neither a tragedy nor a comedy is a tame lifeless chronicle. It is stories of perils and hair-breadth escapes, of aristocratic marriages attended with scandal, of wars resulting in rivers of blood and hillocks of bone, of politics dealing with refinements of human wickedness, that are unanimously voted to be charming. Fairy tales in history or fiction fire the imagination and bewitch the average reader. Such

tales are relished with the keen excitement of a hunter engaged in a chase. The history of the Protestant Reformation in Europe is very largely a narrative of politics and war. It deals with the tyranny of kings, with the blood of the martyr, with the reign of terror that smothered liberty of conscience, with the suffering of thousands of victims that bent their heads to persecution, with heroes who allowed their hands to be consumed in flames rather than retract a syllable of their writings, with reformers like Luther who defied the power of Royalty. It was, in the main, a story of ravages by the fire and the sword.

In India, too, there have been great Reformations, but none so bloody as those of the west. Researches are tending to prove that the so-called persecution of Budhists by the combined forces of Brahmanical ascendency, is, more or less, a figment of imagination or exaggeration. There were, undoubtedly, isolated cases of violent intolerance in all cases of change. On the whole, looking at the magnitude of some of the revolutions, the old order yielded silently to the new, with none of the destructive convulsions that might be expected on such occasions.

The Protestantism inaugurated by Sri Madhva was a bloodless reformation. It has no tales of bloodshed to recount, no martyrdom committed to the flames, and no rebellions against law and order, to describe. The triumphs are purely achievements of peace. For centuries, it has been an important factor in the domain of thought, shaping, fashioning, and controlling the trend of civilization, but its claims were never proclaimed by the blatant advertisement of sensational episodes.

Sri Madhva had done enough by way of valorous deeds in his previous Avatars. He now followed a

path of peace. He used persuasion as his only weapon. He worked slowly and silently in the society of the poor and the humble, and seldom touched even the fringes of royal courts.

It would be of singular interest to know, if possible, all about the society in which this Reformation took shape, the ideals that ruled the times, the currents of thought that animated the leaders of the day, and the nature of the true forces that were in operation, together with the direction in which they acted. A divine author alone is competent to do justice to the great character of Sri Madhva, and portray fully the inner workings of his great mind, and present the apparently simple annals of the Master in their true light. But it is not given to us to perform this divine task. In most cases, the episodes handed down to us are mere outlines and skeletons, which, no amount of conjecture can fill in, with flesh and life.

Judging the tree by its fruit, and seeing how the old inertia was overcome, how the ball of change was set in motion, how the rigid ice of conservatism was broken and thawed, how the inert mass of customary thought got into a ferment, one is naturally disposed to think that the history of the age in question must be one of momentous interest. The subject might bristle with life, if handled by talents such as I do not unfortunately possess.

Years rolled by, since Sri Madhva was ordained. The dialectical triumph referred to in the last chapter, lifted him at a bound to a high place in public estimation. The criticism of Ishta Sidhi brought his philosophical acumen to the fore-front. The exposition of Sri Mad Bhagavata established his versatile lore. Slowly, but surely, he attracted a following. The life

of celibacy that he led was an impressive object-lesson of what true renunciation ought to be. The lustre in which his person was covered, reflected a moral and spiritual halo, far and wide.

It may be presumed that Achuta Preksha was a monk of virtues and some weaknesses. If he had the usual share of foibles that men of his class possessed, it is a little bit difficult to understand how lenient and forgiving he was to the rebellions of his pupil. Under ordinary circumstances, no Guru would have forgiven the ruthless treatment given to Ishta Sidhi. Nor would he have put up with the implied humiliation of having his views analysed and dissected as they were, and blown to the winds by a mere stripling. But he did not resent all this. May be, that his faith itself in the old dogmas was lukewarm. May be, that he was an honest Guru who cared not to support his opinions by mean subterfuges.

Achuta Preksha's attitude is not explicable without a due appreciation of the fact that Sri Madhva's personality carried a fascination of its own. He was so thoroughly unlike other persons and other prodigies too. His graceful dignity, his noble bearing, his towering intellect, his sweet smile, and his beaming face impressed one as divine. Looking upon the sweet face, the Guru had no heart for resentment. He was powerless to resist his charms. Day by day, this hypnotic attraction grew in power and acquired a mastery over him. He felt himself drawn more and more towards this Sishya. He knew not what to say or how to act.

Meanwhile, Sri Madhva went on addressing large audiences day after day. Everyday, some new passages were interpreted, some new topic was dis-

cussed, some dogma of old was challenged, and some new light was thrown over an old problem. The hours spent with him were hours of illumination. Everyone rejoiced to hear these daily lectures.

The ground was thus prepared for the new seeds to sprout. Opposition was disarmed and receptivity ensured. Men were prepared to listen and to reflect. Men flocked to him whenever they could snatch an hour from their mundane pursuits and engagements, and eagerly devoured the flowing nectar of his voice. It is presumable that the Master discoursed much on Bhagavata as the sheet-anchor of his teachings. He knew what stress he was going to lay on this remarkable work in his future scheme. He pressed home the Bhakti-marga inculcated by the brilliant chapters of this sovereign Purana. It is not without a purpose that the young sage selected this work for his early discourses. There is no work more elevating and more inspiring to a Vaishnava; for, every chapter herein breathes the spirit of a soul-stirring devotion, and every episode narrated, conveys lessons of lofty self-surrender and etherial worship. He knew that the unmistakable drift of this volume was Dvaita, and that in point of sublimity and chasteness of ideas, the luminous passages of this great book were both peerless and innumerable.

In the course of these discourses, the ability and the influence of Poorna Pragna became more and more manifest. Achuta Preksha noted with pride the morning splendour of the rising sun, and formed within his own mind an estimate of what its noon-day glory would prove to be. He therefore felt that it was no longer necessary to keep this disciple in leading strings, and he resolved to put him in charge of a semi

independent establishment as the Yuva Raj or heir--apparent of the pontifical throne.

Preparations appropriate for this installation were made, so as to celebrate the function in a befitting style. The admiring populace were naturally enthusiastic over the matter, for, they took such a fancy to Poorna Pragna and were proud of him. They rejoiced to participate in any function meant for his honour.

On the appointed day, Achuta Preksha conducted the customary ceremonies and anointed the hero with pourings of holy water from shells of conch. He invoked blessings on Poorna Pragna, and bestowed on him the designation of "Ananda Theertha", in virtue of his new position.

Ananda Theertha! What a significant name! "Ananda" is bliss and 'Theertha' denotes scriptures. The expression compliments the Master as the maker or exponent of blissful scriptures. The etymology of the word conveys several more ideas which it is needless here to dilate upon.

From this time, Ananda Theertha came to be in charge of a small establishment, and spent his time in a separate Mutt. He and his Guru continued, however, on terms of the utmost cordiality. For all practical purposes, the two Mutts were still one and the same.

From this time forward, polemical contests with eminent scholars of the day began to occur at frequent intervals. While ordinary people flocked to his Mutt like bees to a honey-comb to drink deep of his honeyed utterances, Pandits with high pretensions to learning became restlessly jealous to hear of his fame. They

could not bear to hear of a new star of greater magnitude and lustre than themselves, appearing in the galaxy of letters. They therefore journeyed to Udupi in numbers to obtain a first-hand acquaintance with the new celebrity.

Achuta Preksha held an important position among the brotherhood of Sadhoos. He kept an open door of hospitality to visitors in general and to scholarly guests in particular. It chanced that a Sanyasi friend of his was his guest at Udupi with a large number of camp followers including some respectable Pandits. These learned men used to engage Sri Madhva in friendly parleys on miscellaneous topics. They were skilful logicians and prided themselves a bit on their special knowledge. On one of these occasions, the discussion became warm and animated. The point was whether "Inference" was entitled to value as an independent source of knowledge. Perception, Inference, and Testimony, are usually regarded as the main sources of human knowledge. We act on a belief in the veracity of our senses. We act likewise on the testimony of reliable persons. In the same manner, we use the reasoning faculty and draw Inferences from proper grounds. Sri Madhva maintained that this source of human knowledge was far inferior in value to Perception and Testimony. This position was stoutly opposed by his brethern.

The Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya and Yoga systems of philosophy uphold Anumana or Inference as an authority of paramount value. They do not concede the superiority of Pratyaksha (Perception) or Sabda (word) in any sense. As systems resting the weight of their tenets on "Reason," they are commonly referred to as "Haitukas."

Sri Madhva argued that if "Inference" did not rest on Perception or Testimony as its basis in the last resort, most extravagant deductions and inductions may be drawn from any given data. His opponents, being masters and admirers of Haituka schools, challenged the soundness of this proposition.

By way of illustration, they tried by means of...... syllogism to establish that spirit and matter were separate entities. Sri Madhva met them by counter syllogisms of equal cogency. Then, the controversialists exchanged positions. Sri Madhva again proved irresistible. He said that if we choose not to recognise the authority of sense-experience, if we set aside the testimony of speech, writings, and revelations, pure unaided reasoning can establish no truth whatsoever, for, every argument implies postulates of some kind based on the Sense-experience of the arguer, or the word of some reliable personage, be he God or man, in the ultimate.

It was felt that Sri Madhva's demonstration was convincing, though his position was at the outset deemed somewhat startling. The skill and facility with which he handled the technicalities of Anumana, was the subject of universal applause. He had shown himself perfectly at ease amidst a bewildering babel of propositions, middle terms, and deductions. His opponents had prided themselves on their scholarship in this branch of study as a speciality. The assembly were completely disabused of this illusion. At the end of the proceedings, they felicitated him on his powers of reasoning and voted that he was verily a prodigious "*Anumana Theertha.*"

So far, the polemics were chiefly confined to questions of purely academical interest. Lots of

Vaiseshikas came, one after another, entered the lists, displayed their skill by balancing themselves on some tight rope of hair-splitting logical gymnastics, and were speedily silenced by more wonderful feats performed by Ananda Theertha.

We now enter on a new phase of these controversies. Hereafter, the discussions were attended with far-reaching results. They were part of a systematic campaign against dissenters.

I have already noticed in a previous chapter, that South Canara was a great strong-hold of Jainism at least, if not of Buddhism too. Tuluva country is said to resemble Nepal to a large extent in respect to the design and pattern of the Betoos, Basties, and Stambas, abounding in both countries. There were Budhist Pandits of considerable reputation who could expound and defend the doctrines and practices of Budhism, and hold their own against Brahminical attacks. In this District, and many other parts of India, Buddhism survived as a living faith, as it does even now, notwithstanding the supposed overthrow of the system by the Brahminical ascendency led by Sri Sankara and Sri Ramanuja. Sri Madhva rubbed shoulders with many an adversary of this persuasion. During the period under review, one such Budhist of reputed leadership, Budha Sagara by name, came to Achuta Preksha's Mutt, accompanied by Vadi Simha renowned as a Tarkika Scholar. Sri Madhva was then in a different Mutt of his own, away from Udupi. These people came avowedly to engage him in a philosophical contest and defeat him if possible. Achuta Preksha sent for Sri Mad Ananda Theertha, who promptly answered the summons. Then ensued a most animated contest. A large concourse of people

thronged to listen, and eminent umpires took part in the debate to decide the issue. Vadi Simha was the first to lead the attack. In a long peroration, he summed up as many as eighteen alternative positions of attack, to destroy Sri Madhva's possible positions. But Sri Madhva was quite equal to the occasion. His dignified mien and dauntless bearing produced a thrill of awe, and silence. Vadi Simha could proceed no longer, as he was unable to meet the points raised in reply. Budhi Sagara next took up the gauntlet, but fared no better than his predecessor. Being greatly discomfited at the result, these two Pandits pleaded for an adjournment of the debate. Sri Madhva forced them to acknowledge that they were worsted for the time. They did so, and the meeting dispersed for the day, to meet again on the morrow. Next day, people assembled again to enjoy the continuation of the intellectual wrestle. But lo and behold, Vadi Simha and Budhi Sagara had both decamped overnight. Thus ended a highly sensational episode early in the career of our great Acharya. The sensation thus created among the thoughtful men gave a further shake to the foundations of old beliefs. Men came to think that they were no longer to accept doctrines and usages entirely on trust because they bore the sanction of age on their brow. Men felt the vibration of a new life in the atmosphere breathed by Sri Madhva. They felt that his presence filled it with a new ozone which inspired spiritual health and strength. Doubts, partial unbeliefs, vague longings, followed by a general unrest and a spirit of inquiry, were brewing commotion, and served as sure premonitions of an impending charge. Sri Madhva was felt to be the source of the new spirit, the fountain of new currents of thought, whose energy was destined

to vivify society and kindle a new light in Brahmin homes brighter than electric tongues of flame to guide men's erring steps in the Forward Path of salvation. Thus, the foundation was laid and the materials got ready for the great edifice of Sri Madhva's message. Understanding the signs of the times, he began to direct his powers and energies towards the chief point of attack in the old fortress of Sankara's system. He followed up his criticism of Ishta Sidhi, by vigorous attacks on Sankara's Sootra Bhashya. This was a stronghold not likely to surrender at discretion. Achuta Preksha clung with great tenacity to its teachings. From time to time, Ananda Theertha took up a discussion of this work, and exposed its faults and fallacies. Achuta Preksha was reluctant to yield, even when his reason was convinced. A partiality born of habit, a fondness born of the midnight oil consumed for a whole life-time in mastering its contents, made him impatient of criticism. It was his pet fetish, and he would not give it up without a struggle. He allowed the force of Sri Madhva's destructive criticism. It was all very well to criticise and pick holes, he said, but Sri Madhva had not replaced it by a commentary of his own. So Achuta Preksha challenged him to write one if he could. An elderly ascetic of Likucha descent who happened to stay there, added his exhortation on the same lines. This challenge was, of course, accepted. Old Madhyageha paid occasional visits, when Sri Madhva was winning laurels in this manner. On one of these occasions, Sri Madhva was arguing in his matchless style and fluency with a number of Tharkika opponents about the demerits of Sankara Bhashya. Madyageha's eyes were filled with tears of joy, and his heart almost melted with emotion, at the glory of the young ascetic who had once played and

lisped on his knees, whom he had hugged and fondled in his bosom—but who now had grown so great—the delight not of his eyes and heart alone, but of all eyes and all hearts.

CHAPTER X.

SRI MADHVA'S TOUR THROUGH SOUTHERN INDIA.

Very soon after his ordination, Sri Madhva proposed to start on a pilgrimage to the Ganges. But Achuta Preksha Charya would not consent to one of such tender years undertaking such a perilous journey. They say that an unseen voice declared that Ganga herself would visit the local tank within three days and would repeat the visit every twelve years. The proposed pilgrimage was abandoned, because the Guru refused to be parted from the pupil.

Master and pupil made a stay of some duration at Udupi, meeting many a Pandit in friendly or serious controversies. But Sri Madhva could not reconcile himself long to such a stay-at-home life. His mission summoned him to travel through the country and preach his views broadcast. The rules of the sacred order forbade a permanent dwelling, for, this would drift him into the virtual luxuries of a house-holder. The Sanyasin was expected by the Hindu Law to live, with no thoughts of the morrow, on the precarious charity of the public. It was expected that he should be ever on the move, and live contented with whatever God chose to put in his way, by way of food or shelter.

Sri Madhva, true to the law, begged leave to start on some pilgrimage. The Guru yielded at last,

and agreed to accompany him on a pilgrimage through the chief holy places of Southern India.

Our modern ideas of a Sanyasin and his tour are largely associated with retinues and paraphernalia. When we think of an ascetic, our minds rest on the princely Matadhipathies, who travel in palanquins, maintain horses, elephants, and camels, keep an armed guard, and carry about plenty of silver and gold. We are not used to Sanyasins that carry all their luggage on their backs, consisting only of a few Saligram stones and metalic images. The spectacle of a pedestrian monk whose bed is Mother Earth, and whose covering is the blue vault of heaven, is, to us, rather rare.

The India of the twentieth century is not the India of the Medieval times. We are cast on an age when the ancient ideals and methods have undergone a wholsesale revolution. Our idea of locomotion is associated with motor-cars and steam-engines. We are surrounded by facilities of communication unknown before, fine roads and metalled high-ways, Australian bays, and spring carriages. Ours is the age when time and distance have been annihilated by the achievements of machinery. Jules Verne proves that it is possible to travel round the globe in eighty days with a simple portmanteau containing a few bank-notes. We are getting accustomed to have our wants supplied, by turning a handle, or pressing a button, as if in a house of enchantment.

At the time of our history, Southern India comprised numerous small kingdoms the sovereigns of which claimed to be independent of one another. The West Coast consisted of three parcels, Konkana, Tuluva, and Kerala. The coast of Coro-

mandal included Telingana, Dravida, Chola, and Pandiya regions. The interior hedged in by the strips of the East Coast and the West Coast had divisions such as Andhra, Carnata, and Konga.

Much is not known of the political, social, and economical condition of the period. There was one note-worthy element of homogeneity in the circumstance, that the Mahomedan hordes of the north had not yet descended to the south of the Dekhan. The indigenous civilization still remained pure and unaffected by extraneous influence. The iconoclasm of the Mussalman, had not yet broken the idols of our temples, and introduced any 'Gosha' into our manners.

Just north of Konkana, was Maharastra with its capital at Dowlatabad, under the rule of the Yadava dynasty. They held sway for several centuries until overthrown by the Bahmini Mahomedans, in 1347 A.D.

The kingdom of Vijianagar was on the eve of growing into the most powerful empire of India. Vijianagar exists now as a pile of ruins, the debris of a forgotten greatness, resorted to only by antiquarians and archæologists. There lies hidden beneath the debris, a city as vast as London, with all its towers and turrets, palaces and temples, forts and barracks, pulled brick by brick and stone by stone, and scattered for miles by the vindictive onslaught of an infuriated soldiery. This is the Empire that turned a new chapter of glory and power in 1336 A. D. under the joint exertions of Bukka I, and Vidyaranya.

The ruins of Hampi call up memories of sadness such as no cataclysms of nature can awaken. We revere Pampakshetra, as part of the great Dandakaran-

ya immortalized by Valmiki. It was here that Sri Ramachandra met Soogreeva and Hanuman. It was here that he performed marvels of archery.

During the days of Sri Madhva, Vijianagar was a fairly prosperous kingdom. Vijia Dhwaja had built the city in 1150 A.D., and his successors were strengthening and consolidating its resources. The zenith of power was reached after the time of Sri Madhva.

Pampakshetra is of sacred memory to us, even now, for the additional reason that the banks of the Tungabhadra at this spot afforded the last resting place of many a great Sanyasin that succeeded Sri Madhva in the line of Pontiffs. Sage Padmanabha Theertha and Narahari Theertha had their Brindavans on these banks. It was necessarily the scene of their holy labours during the period that they honoured the priestly throne.

To the South of Vijianagar, the kingdom comprising Mysore and the West Coast was under the rule of the descendants of one Vishnuvardhana. This the king whom Sri Ramanuja converted to Vaishnavaism in the twelfth century (1104-1141 A.D.). It was he that broke the power of the western Chalukyas. Narasimha III and his son Bellala III covered the whole period of Sri Madhva's career (1254 to 1342 A.D.)

It was a time of profound peace and of enlightened sovereigns. It was the period when the country came to be studded with marvels of architectural skill. It was a time peculiarly marked by religious upheavals.

In these conditions favourable to reform, Sri Madhva set out from Udupi with his Guru and travelled

south by easy marches. It is certain that he passed by Mangalore, crossed the Netravati and reached the town of Vishnumangalam. Beyond this, the route taken is far from clear.

Authentic evidence fixes Vishnumangalam as the village going by this name about 27 miles south of Mangalore. For reasons not easy to guess at this distance of time, Vishnumangalam seems to have been a favourite place of sojourn with Sri Madhva. He often spent weeks, if not months, in this town camping in the temple of Vishnu. There were evidently many people here who owed allegiance to Achuta Preksha, as their Guru. Numerous entertainments were given to this party in this town on a large scale. Sri Madhva was the centre of general attraction. His youth and learning was the absorbing topic of talk in public and private conversations. His popularity brought on daily entertainments. He was feted with sumptuous Bikshas, in one of which he chose to exhibit an extraordinary feat of digestion.

When Sri Madhva had just finished a heavy dinner and done full justice to it, the host brought a large bunch of 200 plantains, and begged of the Master to partake of the same. He quietly took them, and ate away every fruit of the bunch, without the least exertion or difficulty The other guests of the occasion and the assembled people were struck with amazement. While no other person could have eaten half a dozen fruits under the circumstances, Sri Madhva had gulped fully two hundred. They rubbed their eyes with wonder and perplexity, and began to question him. They asked him eagerly how he had managed what appeared to them an impossibility. The Master replied that he possessed a digestion of unusual

vitality. To give them an idea, he said that the animal heat within him was a flame as thick as the thumb, capable of easily consuming any food and in any quantity.

Sriman Madhva Vijia mentions Trevandram as the next place of importance visited by the touring party, after leaving Vishnumangalam. We are left to conjencture, as best as we may, the precise route taken by the party in ariving at Ananta Sayana. It is possible that Sri Madhva proceeded southwards through Calicut and Cochin, or took an easterly direction avoiding the numerous estuaries and back-water inroads of the sea, that bar the way at short intervals throughout the coast line.

If there was no trunk road along the sea-shore, as exists now, and if the boat service was not very efficient as might be presumed, it is possible that Sri Madhva avoided a crow-flight route to the south. It is near Vishnumangalam that the flag-staff still stands, warning travellers against setting foot in Kerala.

By going westward through the plateau of Mysore and Coimbatore, it was not difficult to cross the ghauts at some favourable point and descend into Travancore.

It will be seen as we proceed, that towards the latter part of his career at least, Sri Madhva moved much in the strip of country lying between the rivers Kumara Dhara and Netravati. This is the Saridantara *doab* referred to in the 16th chapter of Madhva Vijia. The Master toured much in this land, preached to many, and converted not a few of the learned men of those parts. The holy pond

known as Kanva Theertha lies near this tract. The great Aswatha tree beneath which Sri Madhva ordained and founded the brotherhood of the eight Udupi Monks on a single day, is still in evidence. A line drawn from Kumbla and Vishnumangalam on the west, to the peak of Subhramanya on the east, touches a large number of places intimately connected with Sri Madhva's episodes in the tail end of his career.

This circumstance suggests the conjecture that it was not mere chance that led his steps in that direction. A few miles from Kanva to the East, is Kadathala, where an entire copy of Sri Madhva's 37 works lies buried in the ground. Ujara and Nerankee are other places of interest in Sri Madhva's life. Madyathâla is midway from the sea to the Subhramanya peak. Herein remains one of the eight Vedavyasa Saligrams brought by the Master.

On these facts, it will be pardonable to guess that Sri Madhva had from the beginning some kind of ties or associations in this quarter, some good reason to turn to the east after reaching Vishnumangalam. It may be that there were numerous families owing allegiance to his Mutt already, in this *doab*, or it may be that this was the land of old kinship and family ties, the country where the community of Madhyageha and Achuta Preksha lived, for the most part. While on the one hand, it is possible that mere chance led Sri Madhva to visit these places late in life, it is equally possible that he was connected with them from the very beginning by ties of which we have no knowledge and that he visited them even in his very first tour.

In this connection, it may not be unimportant to mention a tradition, though it is not referred to

in Madhva Vijia. The Southernmost Taluq of the Coimbatore District is known as Udamalpet. The Anamalai Hills extend a great deal into this Taluq. Going about twelve miles from Udamalpet, one reaches a range of fairly high hills with a river flowing at the foot thereof. The spot presents a lovely picturesque scenery. The descent of crystal water from rock to rock, and the soft gurgle of sporting waters hardly disturbs the serene solitude of the hermit's seclusion. On one side, is the rising mountain stretching out longitudinally, as far as eye can see. At the foot of it, is the river, nestling, as it were, by its base, and flowing parallel to the mountain. Not a grain of sand or mud floats in the water to disturb its clearness. It is all rock, the bed and banks. On the banks of the river, opposite the hill, there is a shrine sacred to the Trinity, the Trimurthies of the Hindu Pantheon, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. It is even now a favourite resort of the neighbouring country, on all auspicious occasions. Pilgrims are numerous who visit the shrine for discharging all kinds of vows.

In the middle of this river, a large flat rock rests on three boulders, forming a natural bridge, and allowing a free flow of the current underneath. The rock is sufficiently spacious to accomodate at least a hundred persons sitting down for a dinner. Tradition calls this by the name of "Madhvarayan Parai" meaning the rock of Madhvaraya. They add that Sri Madhva travelled to Trevandram by crossing the river (which is fordable easily at any point) and threading the footpaths of the hills leading to the State of Travancore. This mountain—forms in fact the boundary between the modern British India and the said Native State. It is not therefore improbable that Sri Madhva took this

particular route on his way to the temple of Ananta Sayana. It is likely that he spent sometime in the mantap of the sacred Thrimoorthi shrine, and that during his sojourn, he spent long hours sitting on the rock bearing his name, and making *tapas* (meditative prayers) after his bath. One explanation, that is sometimes gussed is, that Sri Madhva set this rock on the Tripod-like stones, and hence it bears his name. But this feat was performed, not here, but in the Mysore Province, at a place known as Ambu Theertha near Kalasa village, Balehonur Taluq, 13° 14′ L., 75° 26′ E., on the right bank of Bhadra. (This rock contains an inscription to this effect,—No. 79 Kadur District, Mudgere). Thus, this guess about the origin of Madhvarayan Parai is made in ignorance of the Ambu Theertha rock whose inscription contains convincing proof of the episode. But there is no ground to reject the tradition that Sri Madhva honoured this spot by a stay of some duration. Dilapidated and broken statues and images of great size, with the ruins of edifices, testify to the existence of a large village or temple, once, close to this shrine. Hence, it is not at all unlikely that Sri Madhva bent his holy steps in this direction, attracted as much by the short cut it offered to reach Ananta Sayana, as by the charming solitude and seclusion of the neighbourhood. Sri Madhva would have loved to look at the lofty scenery of the hills, enjoy the inviting seclusion, take his day-break baths in the crystal springs, do *tapas* in peaceful solitudes under the shelter of stupendous stones, a scenery calculated to throw a spell on any person of introspective leanings and habits, and peculiarly attractive to one of Sri Madhva's bent of mind as a retirement (Asramam) of Rishis.

The conjecture that he passed through what is Coimbatore District now, receives some support and corroboration from the circumstance that an idol of Sri Madhva was an object of worship in one of the temples of a village called Pala Tholuvu near the Uttukuli Railway Station of this District. This village had many flourshing temples including one dedicated to Hanuman. The ruins in the vicinity of the village testify to this. During the troublous convulsions of the Ante-British History, these temples suffered like thousands of others in this unhappy country. Sri Madhva's image was lying uncared for like other images, until, very recently, the venerable Head of Mula Bagal Mutt, took possession of it. It is now included among the idols worshipped in the Brindawana Tope on the banks of the Cauvery near the Cauvery station of the Madras Railway. It is a significant fact that such an image should have been found in Pala Tholuvu. It may be that Sri Madhva stopped for a time in this village on his way to Thirmoorthy hills and Trevandram, and that he left such a strong impression on the inhabitants that they commemorated the stay by a small statue.

I have probably taken far too much space in pressing the claims of a mere conjecture. My anxiety is to place on record whatever materials exist, as the foundation of further research. I feel no partiality or bias in fovour of the supposition thus discussed, and shall feel no disappointment to find myself mistaken.

By some route or other, the party arrived at Trevandram and spent some time in the holy precincts of Sri Padmanabha temple, while staying in this town. Sti Madhva found himself thrown into unpleasant contact with the then head of the

Sringeri monastery. It chanced that Vidya Sankara Swami of the Sringeri Matt, the lineal representative of the original Sri Sankara, was also touring towards Rameswaram. The Sringeri list of geneological succession notes 1228 A.D. as the year in which this abbot became Pontiff.

For many obvious reasons, the meeting of Sri Madhva and Vidya Sankara was unpleasant and unfortunate. The former was a young Reformer, full of enthusiasm and brimming over with energy and ardour. The latter was the head of an institution which had a sort of undisputed sway so far, and was in command of wealth and influence. Vidya Sankara's position hardly admitted of a tolerating spirit and meekness. He could not have looked upon Sri Madhva as other than a heretic, and could not have repressed a smile of disdain from his own standpoint.

When the interview came on, a stormy altercation was the result. The belief is that Vidya Sankara was no other than Sri Sankara himself re-incarnated.

A calm demeanour and dispassionate argument was out of the question when the Sringeri Monk found himself bearded by a mere youth. Where he expected submission, loyalty, and respectful address, he met with defiance and challenge. He was therefore completely put out.

It is obvious that an academical disputation took place and that the subject was no other than Sri Sankara's Adwaita. Sri Madhva had, by this time, become quite an adept in dealing with the weak points of monism. He levelled his blows with firmness and courage, and desisted not, until the adversary surrendered.

Vidya Sankara deemed it presumption for Sri Madhva to criticise Sankara Bashya without having written a commentary, himself, to take its place. When arguments failed, the well-known device of abusing "the plaintiff's Attorney" was largely resorted to. The challenge was thrown out that Sri Madhva ought to write a 'A Bhashyam' if he could. Sri Madhva retorted that nothing was nearer his heart than to produce such a commentary, and that he was thankful that no penal code had penalized his intention to produce one.

At last, they parted in anger, quite unreconciled and unconvinced. Both left Trevandram *en route* to Cape Comorin and the island of Rameswaram. They did not meet again before reaching this last place.

Some months must have elapsed in the interval. One day, when Sri Madhva was going to the sea for bath, he met Vidya Sankar again. This was in Rameswaram. The acrimonious meeting of Ananta Sayana came to be repeated with ten-fold bitterness. An animated and stormy altercation ensued. They sat down for a contest. Sri Madhva challenged his opponent to a disputation, the penalty whereof should be, to destroy the sceptre of the vanquished debatant. Madhva Vijia does not expressly say whether the challenge was accepted and whether anybody's sceptre was broken. There was a contest and Sri Madhva came out victorious.

It was now the month of Ashadha when the Sanyasin should, by the rules of the order, pitch his camp somewhere, and cease to travel for four months, under a vow. Sri Madhva camped in Rameswaram where Vidya Sankara also fixed his camp for the period.

Vidya Sankara tried his level best to make it hot for Sri Madhva to stay here. Various annoyances, small and great, were tried, in vain, to force him to leave the place. He tried a sort of guerilla warfare by devising endless petty harassments, so as to make the sojourn anything but peaceful and comfortable to Sri Madhva. But Sri Madhva remained quite unruffled by the mischiefs. He showed himself quite above pettiness, and treated the tactics of the enemy as beneath contempt. If Vidya Sankara expected Sri Madhva to break the vow, and depart in haste, or expected him to engage in a public quarrel so as to break public tranquillity and get into the throes of law he was sorely mistaken.

After a stay of four months in Rameswaram, Sri Madhva and his party journeyed home through the Pandya and Chola country on the coromandel coast. He stopped for some time at the island of Srirangam to visit the famous temple of Sri Ranganath, situated at the confluence of the expansive Cauvery and Coleroon. This was, as it is even now, the most important centre of Vaishnava faith in Southern India. Proceeding from Srirangam, Sri Madhva took many an important place in the Kingdom of Tanjore. Among them, one is noteworthy. Near Shyali and Chidambaram, is the famous temple of Sri Mushnam—dedicated to Bhu Varaha. It is now a village in the British Taluq of Chidambaram, South Arcot District.

The Chronicle of Sri Mushnam contains a reference to Sri Madhva's visit to this place. It mentions a holy pond known as Danda Theertha as sanctified and created by Sri Madhva's Danda (sceptre). It is said that the Acharya observed while staying in a Brahmin house where he was treated with great hospi-

tality, that the village suffered much from scarcity of water. He took compassion on a pregnant lady, and created this Theertha out of his Danda, thus conferring on the hospitable host and the villagers, the boon of an unfailing fountain of water. This Danda Theertha, it may be noted, claims an origin similar to the Danda Theertha near the Acharya's village of birth, where also, it is said, that a fountain was tapped by the mysterious aid of the Acharya's wand, in order to furnish his late Guru (the village school-master) with a perennial flow of water for his lands.

In this return journey, the Acharya had of course to meet many Pandits of South India in public assemblies. He addressed many assemblies of learning and vigorously expounded the true import of the Upanishads.

Once, in a temple on the banks of the Chandragiri the Aiytareya Upanishad was the subject of a sensational discussion. In this connection, Sri Madhva told his hearers that every Vedic utterance conveyed a triple meaning, that the verses of the Mahabharata had as many as ten meanings, and that each word of the Vishnu nomenclature (Vishnu Sahasranamas) conveyed a hundred. The audience seized upon this assertion, and challenged Sri Madhva to illustrate his statement by expounding the 100 meanings of the Sahasranama. The Acharya began with Visva the 1st, asking his learned hearers to follow him with care. As the exposition proceeded, the admiring Pandits felt staggered, as they could no longer follow the grammatical intricacies, and much less retain them in memory. Sri Madhva went on with the exposition, without the least effort, until the Pandits begged of him to stop, saying, that though he was quite

competent to substantiate his assertion, their limited intelligence and knowledge did not enable them to grasp his interpretations and follow the thread.

Another temple on the banks of the Payaswini (Chandragiri) witnessed an equally sensational gathering. A large number of Pandits from all parts of South India had met there to earn royal rewards for merits ascertained by the old system of *Viva voce* examinations. Sri Madhva came and halted here on his homeward journey. The occasion was naturally availed of, for a great polemic assemblage. Various verses in the Vedic literature formed the text of prolonged argument. Sri Madhva explained his own position with citations of authority. Some were satisfied, and others not. The youth of the Acharya was perhaps one circumstance that stood in the way of his being at once universally accepted. People do have a prejudice against youthful wisdom and a partiality for hoary age. When Sri Madhva conclusively showed that the word "apâla" in a Vedic context could mean only leper and nothing else, the Pandits nodded their heads in doubt, though unable to meet his reasoning. The Acharya left the place, simply saying to them "very well, if my words do not satisfy you, you may refer to a learned Pandit who is going to pay a visit to this place, ere long". And so it transpired that a Pandit did come, and that he confirmed the view of Sri Madhva, just as he had foretold.

In due course, the party returned to Udupi, and offered worship at the feet of Ananantesware by a service of hearty thanks-giving for the successful accomplishment of the tour. It was an arduous journey to accomplish in those days. Starting from Udupi, he literally made a full tour of South

India, by chiefly taking the west coast on the way to Rameswaram, and taking the east, in the return journey. He touched at important centres, and paved the way for his great mission by meeting the luminaries and celebrities of the day, in *Viva Voce* discussions. He attacked the official head of the old school, and shook the foundations of the old edifice. This meeting must have opened men's eyes a bit, to see that robes and sceptres were not by themselves unimpeachable passports of knowledge, and that innovations might be tolerated, if founded on good reasons and authority. Men whose minds were already suffering from acute doubts, but who had not dared to speak out their minds regarded the meeting and the tour as an epoch-making event and they no longer spoke of the Sankarite monastery and its institutions with bated breath. They rejoiced to see a new star in the galaxy, that bade fair to out-shine all other constellations, by its radiant splendour. They realized that a new sun had appeared, by the side of which, the old lamps were not even as good as rushlights.

We may pause a minute, to ponder over the results of this tour, lest we should fail to realize its full import, as we are apt to do, if we do not weigh it well in our minds. A young ascetic bent on introducing innovations, more or less radical, into the stronghold of conservatism, travelled through strange lands with very uncertain prospects of welcome. He encountered the powerful chief of the opposing sect (the then prevailing sect) at Trevandrum and also at Rameswaram. Pitted against such a powerful enemy and encountering the thousand and one troubles and annoyances incidental to such an unhappy coincidence and contact, Sri Madhva travelled through

inhospitable countries, and overcame opposition by the sheer force of his great personality. He would have been nowhere as against Vidya Sankara if he had been less daring, less learned, and less resourceful than he was. He fascinated everyone that came in contact with him, by the magic of his ringing voice, by the magnetism of his delivery, by the vigour of his discourses, by the earnestness of his manner and convictions, and above all, by the sincerity, piety, and purity of his simple life. After Vidya Sankara's discomfiture, his difficulties greatly diminished. The great ball of progress that had remained stuck firm and immoveable in the old order of things, and lay imbedded deep in the mire of conservatism and habit, was lifted up and rolled into motion. It was a great task to overcome the powerful resistance offered by the inertia of orthodox beliefs. But the task was accomplished. Doubts arose and these led to inquiry. The march of Sri Madhva along the coast of Coromandel via Srirangam and Sri Mushnam, was not altogether on a bed of thorns, though it was not yet a bed of roses. The assemblies of learning did not descend into pettiness in their opposition. They were prepared to listen and to appreciate, instead of mobbing or stoning him as an innovator. This was, of course, a hopeful, promising, preparation of the field, to sow the seeds of His Message. He had good reason to hope that the soil was not barren, to hope that the harvest would be far from despicable.

CHAPTER XI.

FIRST TOUR TO BADARI.

It was now seven years since the Ordination. Sri Madhva had spent a large portion of this period in the southern tour. Ever since he bearded Vasudeva, Vadi-Simha, and Budhi Sagara, he had received challenges from friendly as well as hostile quarters, to write out, if he could, commentaries of the old scriptures, so as to demonstrate the tenability and soundness of his views. Few people valued a merely destructive criticism, for, this was deemed unconvincing and inconclusive To friends and foes, Sri Madhva pledged his word, that he would bring out a convincing interpretation of the Sutras and the Shastras.

All the time that His Holiness was meeting scholars in discussion, his mind was actively engaged in collecting, collating, and annotating the texts forming the basic platform of Dualism. He was, day by day, pushing conclusions to a head.

A dispassionate study and review of the Shastras led him to build up the frame-work of Dwaita. The collective drift of Vedic Scriptures, *the true Vedanta of Badarayana*, led him to hold that Jeeva and God were not and never could be, one.

The Bhagavad Gita of Sri Krishna was the first work chosen by His Holiness for annotating. Bhagavad Gita is *the* book of books adored in every household in India. It is the epitome of what is truly grand in the field of Indian philosophy and religion. Sri Sankara and Sri Ramanuja had devoted their

talents and eloquence to it to illuminate its hidden meanings. Sri Madhva opined that both of them had missed the mark. He felt the need for a thoroughly new work dealing with the very kernel of Sri Krishna's immortal teachings. During the sojourn in South India or soon after his return to Udupi, His Holiness prepared a commentary of the Bhagavad Gita, characterised by brevity of expressions and profundity of thought

In respect to the publication of the system which he chalked out and formulated in this great work, Sri Madhva was in no hurry to precipitate matters. He had arranged in his own mind, a plan of operations for approaching the public in proper time and promulgating his tenets. He probably wished that the contemplated commentary of the Brahma Sutras, too, should not be delayed long after the appearance of his Gita Bhashya.

His plan was first of all to visit the Himalayan hermitage of VedaVyasa—what is usually spoken of as Badarikashrama. It was reputed that Vyasa still lived there with Rishis. He longed to pay his respects at the lotus-feet of Vyasa and obtain his approbation for embarking on evangelisation and reformation.

Having made up his mind to start, he addressed attention to make the necessary preparations. A small but devoted band of followers promised to accompany him. They were prepared to brave any perils on the way. Of these picked men, ascetic Satyatheertha was the most prominent. This was a Sanyasin who had been ordained and initiated by Achuta-Preksha himself. It was he that ultimately inherited the succession and continued the line of the Bandarkare and Bheemanakattey Mutts. Though

formally the *chela* of Achuta Preksha, he was an ardent follower of Sri Madhva. He had attached himself with singular devotion to Sri Madhva's Mutt, and was ever engaged in holy studies under the Master.

It only remained for Sri Madhva to seek permission of his Guru, to depart. It was evidently clear that Achuta Preksha would not, or could not, accompany the party. Either he was too old, or too feeble, to attempt a Himalayan ascent, or perhaps there were other causes. It was urged that Sri Madhva had set his heart on this pilgrimage, years before, and that it had been abandoned in deference to the Guru's wishes. Sri Madhva was much older now, and could be relied upon to accomplish the journey and return in safety. He pleaded earnestly for permission, on the ground that the visit to Badari was the dearest ambition of his heart.

A great conflict of considerations *Pro* and *Con* produced a severe struggle in the Guru's mind in weighing the circumstances of this request. A trip to Kasi was awful enough, but a climb up the Himalayas was verily a staggering idea. His mind was filled with alarm to think of the probable and possible risks and perils such a daring enterprise implied. On the other hand, an inner voice whispered to him not to judge of Sri Madhva by ordinary standards, not to view him as of the ordinary mould. It struck him that this pupil of his would be the High Priest of a great mission, and that the hidden purposes of such a mission required his presence all over the country. He felt that it was not proper to keep him detained by silken strings out of personal motives or selfish attachment.

Thinking over the matter thus, and taking a reasonable view, he was inclined to give him leave to set out. When the point was pressed home that the pilgrimage was undertaken not from idle curiosity but for a deep and high purpose, the Guru granted the prayer. Before taking final leave, Sri Madhva offerred to his Guru, a copy of his Bhagavat Gita commentary as some recompense for the impending separation. He wished and intended that, during his long absence, Achuta Preksha should peruse the pages of the new work and ponder over their contents.

After mentioning the fact that Sri Madhva and party started on this journey, " Madhva Vijia " takes us at a bound to the Himalayas. We are not told what countries were passed through, and what were the adventures, if any, suffered on the way. No doubt, the Master had his eye on Badari and made for the goal without tarrying anywhere a moment longer than was necessary. He passed through Benares and bathed in the Ganges on the way. But he evidently did not seek the famous Pandits of Kasi and speak to them as he had done in various centres of learning in Southern India. He reserved this for a future occasion.

On the slopes of the Himalayan range, there is a temple dedicated to Nara Narayana. This is at an elevation not quite beyond reach or endurance. The Master pitched his camp at a place known as Ananda Mutt, and resolved to make here a sojourn of some length. The precincts were exceptionally holy and attractive. He felt the spiritual presence of Nara Narayana close by and of Vyasa in the hermitage over-head. He took time to arrange his programme and prepare himself for doing the final part of the journey.

There was the Gita commentary to be submitted for approval. He meant to lay it at their feet and take orders for the future. The time was come for putting his long-cherished ideas into execution. As he thought of it, he felt a thrill too solemn for words. Day and night he concentrated all his thoughts on God, and led a life of such devotion and prayer as to be on the verge of Samâdhi. His daily programme was to bathe in the early hours of the dawn in the chill ice-cold stream of the Ganges, regardless of the freezing cold, and do *tapas* for the rest of the day on a secluded boulder of rock, or within the premises of the temple.

When he was in the presence of the Deity, he used to send away all his followers and spend hours in the solitude of the Divine Presence. On one of these occasions, when it was night, he opened the newly composed Gita commentary and read the opening lines. "My prostrations to the Supreme Lord Narayana, full of perfect attributes and free from any flaw: my prostrations likewise to Badarayana, my Guru. I proceed to construe and interpret the Gita, *a little*." A voice of approval was heard in the solemn silence proceeding from the Deity of the temple. The great Father of all approved of the commentary and acknowledged its merits. Adverting to Sri Madhva's modest avowal that the annotation was only a meagre exposition, the lord allowed the expression to stand, for, He said, that, though Sri Madhva was competent to do justice to Gita, and expound all its hidden subtleties of thought, still, the limited intelligence of the reading public required a commentary that was bound to be meagre in order to be within their grasp.

Sri Madhva was alone when the Lord thus took shape and spoke to him. His followers were lying down asleep or awake beyond sight. Those who were within earshot distinctly heard the words of the Lord, that the expression indicating the meagreness of the commentary might stand. The words had been accompanied by a distinct sound, as if made by the Lord's palms in token of drawing attention and approving The disciples who heard the words and the sound were dumb-founded with surprise. They thought that Sri Madhva had been either asleep or musing within himself. But he was being spoken to, by no other than the Lord. His commentary was being read and approved. The disciples heard it all and were simply galvanized by the situation. They realized what was happening. Their tongue clave to the roof, and their limbs felt paralysed. They lay where they were, lost in wonderment.

The day dawned, and Sri Madhva inaugurated a new era in the world of thought, by publishing his Gita commentary. After ablutions and the daily round of Poojas, he gathered his pupils about him and expounded Bhagavat Gita to them according to the commentary. He taught them the true import of Sri Krishna's immortal words and expounded how the Supreme God meant all his creation to worship Him. And what a glorious book had Sri Madhva produced, though he had called it a meagre commentary in becoming humility! It was read, and listened to with rapt attention. A veritable treasure of wisdom was unfolded to view. They were sparkling thoughts embodied in brief pithy phraseology that pierced into the heart. Sri Madhva had wasted no time in ornamental diction. He had not cared to bewitch or delude

by flowers of rhetoric. He was in terrible seriousness to unmask the hollowness of monism in every form, and illuminate the true relations of God and man. Under the touch of the new magic, Sri Madhva's system shone with a light that was truly impressive. Order seemed to come out of chaos and contradictions. Every part of the Lord's utterances fitted beautifully into the whole and all mysticism seemed to vanish in the light of Sri Madhva's harmonization. The Himalayan visit thus marked a red-letter-day in our calendar, notwithstanding the circumstance that nobody has cared to note the exact year, month, or date, thereof, literally speaking. It marks an epoch as the commencement of a new wave of thought in the progress of the world's religions.

Sri Madhva made a stay of some duration in the holy shrine of Sri Narayana. Sri Sankaracharíar of Adwaita fame had extended his teachings up to this limit. It is said that a Nambudri Brahmin is still the officiating priest of this temple. There was some appropriateness in Sri Madhva commencing his crusade at this point the northern most limit of Sri Sankara's influence, and spreading it southwards far and wide in the Continent of Bharata.

It was Sri Madhva's desire to soar higher to the wilds of the Himalayas, and visit the inaccessible hermitage of Vada Vyasa, known as the true Badari. They say that sage Badarayana dwells there with his chosen disciples even now, leading and teaching a life of indescribable holiness. Sri Madhva wished to present himself before the King of Rishis, and dedicate himself, body and soul, unto Him. He desired to see the great sage and be blessed for ever more. He longed to sit at His feet and learn

lessons in the mysteries of Vedanta. He ardently wished to lay his Gita commentary at his lotus-feet, and obtain his divine sanction for the propagation of Dwaita as the true import of all his works, Meemamsa, Bhárata, Bhághavata, and the Puranas.

As a preparation for this great journey, Sri Madhva spent his time in fasting and prayer. Though a holy of holies already and always, he considered no amonnt of piety and preparation too much for the desired end. He filled his thoughts with Vyasa, centred his soul upon him, and lived a life of the severest penance and the deepest contemplation. He took no food for 48 days and observed a vow of speechless meditation during the whole period.

They say that Sri Vyasa appeared before Sri Madhva one night, and invited him to go over to his hermitage up above. This was the consummation so devoutly longed for. To say that he felt a thrill, an ecstasy, falls far short of the actuality. Language is too poor a vehicle to translate the transcendental feelings felt by the devout in their personal communion with God. So, I desist from attempting a description.

When the day dawned, Sri Madhva made haste to commence the onward march. He summoned his pupils and followers, and wrote out a few words of parting, for their information and consolation. He was still under the vow of speechlessness, and therefore, had to resort to writing. From a mortal point of view, the intended journey was not only a long and arduous one, but a positively dangerous one. No ordinary mortal could think of it. The risks were immense and the chance of returning very poor indeed. Sri Madhva therefore made his will, as it were. He had no worldly goods to dispose of, no thoughts of

kith and kin, no sickly sentiment to whine over. He wrote:—"This.place is holy ; Vishnu is supreme: My word is meant for the good of all. I leave, to pay respects to Vyasa ; I may or may not return, May God bless you." The pith of the message consisted in declaring Vishnu, the sovereign of the universe. He emphasized this for the good of humanity. His heart had no yearnings, no longings, but simple blessings for mankind, and he emptied his heart by pouring forth a benediction, a sincere blessing, for the salvation of man.

With this, his testament was made, and he took leave of all. He meant to depart unaccompanied by any servant, follower, or companion. The ascent began with sun-rise. Sri Madhva climbed like a born mountaineer who knew his business. He seemed quite at home among the boulders and forest tracts, and leapt from hill to hill with an agility that was truly surprising.

Among the pupils of the Acharya, one Satya Theertha was so devotedly attached to him that he could not consent to remain behind when Sri Madhva undertook the perilous journey alone. He had studied Aitareya thrice under the Acharya and was prepared to lay down his life for the Master. He therefore set out to accompany Sri Madhva.

With great difficulty, he managed to keep Sri Madhva within range of sight from sunrise to sunset. Sri Madhva took no halt for food or rest. The pathless wilds caused him no impediment. As for fatigue, there was not the slightest trace of it on him. Poor Satya Theertha felt that in his state of weakness and exhaustion, to continue the journey was impossible. At about sunset, Sri Madhva turned round and

beckoned to Satya Theertha to retreat. He waved his hand as a signal to go back. Satya Theertha felt a gust of wind impelling him to retrace his way. An unseen power seemed to carry him back to his camp. He soon reached Ananda Mattam safely, and without much of effort, and told his friends what he had seen. He described Sri Madhva to them as a Super-human personality whose footsteps no mortal could follow, unless he chose. He told them how by the Guru's grace he had been almost carried home by invisible powers, at the wave of his hand.

So long as Satya Theertha had been following, Sri Madhva had felt his own progress impeded, as it were, by a chain that dragged him to earthly associations. When Satya Theertha retired, Sri Madhva leapt freely from hill to hill, and made a rapid progress through the wilderness. He soon reached the peak of Badari, and at the top, he tarried a bit for composure of mind before ushering himself into the great Presence. He unconsciously passed the chief events of the past in a rapid review befor his mental vision, and sent up a fervent prayer of thankfulness to the Lord for his grace in guiding his steps surely and steadily to the goal. He pondered over Nara Narayana's kindness and Sri Vyasa's condescension. He devoured the scene before his eyes as he set foot on the holiest of the holy spots, and made his way through a shola of magnificent charm. It was a miniature scene of Vaikunta, wherein the special presence of God inspired nature with a glow and glory not to be met with anywhere else in the creation. The mighty palms, the chirping birds, the tamed brutes were so unlike their kindred and brethren of

the plains. The scene enraptured the senses, and captured the soul at a glance. The hermits who lived with the great Vyasa, were blessed Mahatmas, who had fairly conquered the conditions obtaining in the plains, and obeyed not any laws of the weather, or the appetites, that enslave the human frame here below.

Sri Madhva moved slowly into the sacred precincts, delighted by what he saw and what he heard. He caught sight, from afar, of the great Rishi surrounded by a devoted band of Mahatmas, and engaged in revealing some great secret of God's inscrutable attributes, a veritable embodiment of Truth, Light, and Bliss. The Divine effulgence shed a soft light far and wide, and guided Sri Madhva's steps into the labyrinths, unto His Presence. At last, the pleasure, the ecstacy! He stood face to face with the Lord, the deity of his worship, the Guru of his adoration, his guide, philosopher, and friend. He bethought himself of the infinite grace that had led him thither, and promptly lay down prostrate at the lotus feet of Vyasa in mute adoration. It was a dedication absolutely perfect, a selfless surrender which was untainted by the least tinge of hope or fear, and unprompted by the remotest allusion to any cherished desire. There he lay, prostrate like a log of wood, resigning himself, body and soul, unto his Guru and God.

The great searcher of hearts knew, of course, the unlimited Bhakti surging within the breast of this visitor. He lifted Sri Madhva from the ground, and blessed him by a fond embrace that sent a Divine thrill, and made his hair stand on end. Sri Madhva opened his eyes to devour the form of the Lord, take in every limb and feature, and imprint it on his mind,

No. 3.

" Within a short time, Sri Madhva made a remarkable progress dies."—P. 121.

and treasure it up in his memory. He rested his eyes and focussed his mind on the Divine person, and passed it in review from head to foot associating it with some great Divine attribute he could think of at the moment.

Time fleeted, unfelt, and unheeded. When the thrill of the first contact subsided a little and equanimity was restored, a warm welcome was accorded to Sri Madhva by Vyasa and the brethren of the holy order. They treated him with lavish kindness and hospitality. He lost no time and found no difficulty in making himself at home with the new environments. Soon he became the foremost pupil of the sage.

The Lord initiated him in the true knowledge, and the *chela* imbibed it, to an extent that the brother Mahatmas were amazed to note. They observed the affinity that bound the Guru and the Sishya together, the intimacy of their relation and the cordiality of their mutual attachment. Within a short time, Sri Madhva made a remarkable progress in his studies and learned all that the sage meant he should he equipped with, for the purposes of his mission.

In the enjoyment of this bliss Divine, he would have stayed away altogether, but the camp at Ananda Mutt reminded him of his earthly duties. He therefore had to set aside his own wishes, and get ready to commence the descent from the Himalayan heights. In the course of an affectionate parting, reference was made to the great Sutras (aphorisms) of Vyasa and its true interpretation. Short, pithy, and pregnant with elliptical sense, these aphorisms badly required a lucid comment. Sri Sankara and Sri Ramanuja had forced their monism absolute or qualified into them, and misread the mind of the author. Sri Sankara had gone so far as to dispute the authority of the Sutras,

wherever he found it impossible to reconcile them with his own notions. To justify this strange position, his admirers even resorted to a fiction that Sri Vyasa and Sri Sankara once held a controversy in person over one of the aphorisms, and that the disputation was so hotly sustained on both sides as to end in a drawn battle. This story is highly suggestive of an inner consciousness that, when all is said, the fact remains that Sri Sankara seriously deviated from the Sutras, and that the great Sankara Bhashya is not a faithful commentary of Vyasa, but virtually an original treatise of his own.

Sri Madhva undertook to interpret the aphorisms in their true light. Vyasa and Nara Narayana warmly asked him to do so. He departed with this behest on his head, regarding it the most solemn duty of his life to obey and carry it out.

CHAPTER XII.

RETURN HOME.

Sri Madhva took a reverential leave of Vyasa, and commenced the return journey. By the time he reached level ground, his Sootra Bashya was ready. This is a veritable masterpiece. It contains unambiguous quotations from acknowledged works of authority, in support of every position held by him. It was not a mighty volume in size, but it was the essence of the Vedanta distilled from the vast range of Sruties, Smrities, Puranas, and the Epics. Sri Madhva emerged out of the mountain, with inspired thoughts, ready to propagate the faith of Vaishnavaism, purged of all its adhering dross. By the halo of the spiritual light he was seen enveloped in, he was well qualified to be the Messiah of a Reformed Religion. His erudition was unequalled in depth and range, and his mastery of the sacred writings was simply perfect. There were already twenty one commentaries extant, which purported to be authoritative interpretations of the Brahma Meemamsa. He took aim against these, and his shafts wrought deadly havoc. The old commantaries were the following :—

1. Bharati Vijia.
2. Sachidanda.
3. Brahma gosha.
4. Satananda.
5. Udvarta.
6. Vijia.
7. Rudra Batta.
8. Vamana.
9. Yadavaprakasa.
10. Ramanuja.
11. Bartru Prapancha.
12. Dravida.
13. Brahma Datta.
14. Bhaskara.
15. Pisacha.
16. Vriti Kara.
17. Vijia Bhatta
18. Vishnu Kranta.
19. Vadeendra
20. Madhava Dasa.
21. Sankara.

Devout Satya Theertha copied out Sri Madhva's Sootra Bhashya, in the conviction that every letter be transcribed brought the writer more merit than the founding of a temple on the banks of the Ganges. In the course of the journey, several copies were prepared, and an advance edition was sent to Udupi, for the perusal of Achuta Preksha.

Leaving the Himalayan slopes, Sri Madhva seems to have taken an easterly route towards Ganjam and Godaveri. Eager throngs of people welcomed him everywhere, and did him honour He was no longer regarded a novice or an innovator.

He bestowed the grace Divine on all who came in search of light, and freely accepted hospitalities. Miraculous feats of eating were always nothing to him. He partook of four or six Bickshas at one time, when Agni Sarma and others besought him, finding himself unable to tarry five or six days to oblige them one after another.

I presume that Sri Madhva took Bengal in this tour. It is probable that he touched at Nadia, and made an impression on that great centre of learning. For centuries Nadia *alias* Nawa Dweep, was the foremost city of literary eminence in Bengal, to which all India resorted as the fountain-head of knowledge. It was a university of Oriental learning, more famous than Athens in its palmiest days. Herein masterly professors gathered thousands of pupils around them, and taught them Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric, in a manner commanding the admiration of the literary world. This is the birth-place of Lord Gouranga *alias* Krishna Chaitanya, who revolutionized Bengal two centuries later by the remarkable light in which he presented Vaishnavaism and the great impe-

tus he gave to "Hari Bole" and Bhakti. Swami Vivekananda is of opinion that the Chaitanya faith that dominates in Bengal followed the teachings of Sri Madhva Muni in vital principles. The reader is referred to Lord Gouranga's life written by Sishir Kumar Ghose for a soul-stirring account of Sri Krishna Chaitanya and his gospel of Dwaita. This great Reformer was a contemporary of Vyasa Raya Swami the great Priest that laid Madhva literature under immense obligation in the 16th century by his " Chandrika", " Nyayamrita" and " Tharka Thandava". Swami Vivekananda observes in his " Vedanta in all its aspects", "There have been the great southren preacher and following him our great Chaitanya of Bengal taking up the philosophy of Mâdhvas, and preaching it in Bengal." If this view be correct, as it seems to be, judging from S. K. Ghose's book also, a historical explanation may be deemed necessary and some day some researcher may trace it to Sri Madhva's times, by lighting upon a visit or visits paid by him or his immediate successors to Bengal, and detecting the seed of " Sad-Vaishnavaism " sown in this land.

It is clear from Madhva Vijia that the Guru visited the Godavery. As may seem from the sequel, it was here that he met the two great Pandits Sobhana Bhatta and Sami Sastry, who became his apostolic successors later on, under the designation of Padmanabha Theertha and Nara Hari Theertha. The latter was a native of Ganjam, belonging to a high family that held hereditary office as the ministers of Gajapathi Kings. Thus, there is nothing improbable in Sri Madhva having passed through Bengal to reach the shrine of Jagannath in Orissa, and descending into the District containing the famous Sri Koormam and

Simhachalam temples of Ganjam and Vizagapatam. The great Gurus of India seldom miss important temples and shrines, in their tours, for, their object in touring is to visit such places and offer worship therein. The Sri Koormam temple of Ganjam and the Simhachalam temple of Vizagapatam are places that Sri Madhva would surely not have avoided.

It was on the banks of the Godavery, that Sri Madhva made his first great conversion by convincing the greatest Pandits of the day. Upon arrival, he found himself thrown amidst a regular concourse of learned men who had gathered at the place for earning royal rewards by submitting to prescribed tests of merit. He encountered eminent exponents of Bhatta, Prabhakara—Vaiseshika, Naiyayika, Boudha, and Charvaka systems, and plunged into polemical contests with them, Standing on rocky ground, and attacking them with the weapons of a true Vaishnavaism, these six systems could ill-resist the onslaught. They crumbled at the touch of Sri Madhva's logic and proofs.

It was, at this juncture, that Sobhana Bhatta, already noticed, came forward, with evident hopes of overthrowing Sri Madhva's creed. His great scholarship lent hopes to Adwaitins that the new faith would receive a crushing rejoinder. Sobhana Bhatta turned up, with a deal of flourish, and not a little of self-exaltation and exultation. He sought and obtained an interview. Preliminaries were soon arranged, mediators were secured, an audience assembled and the great combatants entered the arena and closed with each other, in an engrossing debate of far-reaching results. It was a spectacle well worth witnessing, a deadly fight between Dwaita and

No. 4.

Sobhana Bhatta and Sami Sastry.—P. 127.

Adwaita, a mortal combat, the issues whereof were associated with momentous consequences. The audience numbered many an eminent name of the Pandit world, and no less than eighteen branches of Vedic learning were represented among them.

Sobhana showed good fight, but soon lost ground. He was unable to stem the surging waves of Sri Madhva's reasoning. He was no match to the Prince of Debatants, who spoke with luminous inspiration from a depth divine. He could well have tripped by the heels, any ordinary gymnast, by his sophistry, but Sri Madhva was an inspired Messiah. The poor Bhatta's rushlights paled utterly before the Acharya's blazing sunlight It was pronounced that Sobhana Bhatta was wrong, and the Acharya was right. The conviction of defeat was so borne in upon Sobhana Bhatta that he resolved to give up his old faith and become a follower of the new creed. It required no ordinary strength of mind, to translate his conviction into action, and be converted into an alien faith, almost the first man to break the ice. It meant self-effacement that few men would consent to. It meant facing an amount of social odium, cynic sneers, unfriendly jeers, and persecutions of kith and kin, in short, sacrifice to an extent calculated to over awe any man of ordinary mettle. But Sobhana Bhatta was prepared to face the world of obloquy with courage. He was convinced that the numerical majority against him was in the wrong, and he had no hesitation, therefore, to treat that majority and its weapons of persecution with contempt.

This Pandit set aside all egotism and humbled himself before Sri Madhva. He prostrated before

him and craved leave to become a disciple, and study the sacred books, under the Guru. The penitence was sincere and the pupil was worthy, Sri Madhva pondered, and agreed to initiate him and bless him. Another great man, great in scholarship and great in social position, approached the Acharya, while in Godavery, as a supplicant for salvation. This was Sami Sastry who became the famous Narahari Theertha that became later on the Pontiff of the Acharya's Mutt next after Padmanabha Theertha (Sobhana).

Sami Sastry was one born with a silver spoon in the mouth, being the son of a nobleman who held high office under the ruling monarch of Kalinga. He had inherited the prestige and position of his father, and become a favourite in the royal court, by virtue of eminent scholarship attained in the early years of his youth. His studies had predisposed him to a life of Renunciation rather than of worldly preferments. Sri Madhva's fame had attracted his attention. The conversion of Sobhana Bhatta struck him as a remarkable event and had a telling effect on a mind already disposed to renounce secular life. We may well conceive, that, born and brought up amidst the gaudy environments of wealth and rank, he soon realized the hollowness thereof, and felt a sincere disgust with the tinsels of fortune.

In this frame of mind, he approached Sri Madhva and begged to be accepted as a pupil. The prayer was granted, and Sami Sastry changed his appellation by entering the holy order as Nara Hari Theertha.

In due course, Sootra Bhashya was gone through, under the inspired exposition of the author himself, with the result, that Nara Hari Theertha

was strongly confirmed in the attitude he had already taken and kicked violently against the seductive vanities of his inherited life. When Sri Madhva started from the Godavery, and resumed his march, Nara Hari Theertha started likewise, intending to follow the Guru as a shadow, and dedicate his life unto him for personal service. This however was not yet to be. The Acharya told Nara Hari Theertha to spend sometime in the Kalinga Kingdom, with a view to obtain from the Royal treasury, possession of some images representing Rama and Sita, that had a remarkable history about them. Sri Madhva wished to secure these historical images and instal them in his box of worship. He predicted that Nara Hari Theertha would be chosen as the Regent of the kingdom during the infancy of the Ruler, and that the end in view was capable of easy fulfilment.

Nara Hari felt a heavy heart to turn back to the stormy conditions of secular life, but the Guru's wishes were, to him, more than a command. He returned to Kalinga Nagara, the capital of the Gajapathi country, and there it chanced just as it had been foretold, that he was installed as Regent for the infant heir of Royalty by the unanimous choice of the governing ministry and the popular vote.

Archæological records bear witness to the prolonged rule of this Sanyasin. Inscriptions ranging from 1186 to 1215 of Salivahana era, prove the vigour, justice, and benevolence, of the Regent's government. The reign was remarkable in various ways, for the successful defence of the kingdom against invasions, the subjugation of Sabaras, the sworn enemies of the state, for the preservation of peace and

internal order, for the dispensation of even-handed justice, and last, but not least, for innumerable acts of public and private benefaction, religious as well as secular, distributed broadcast all over the country.

In Saka Samvat 1203 (corresponding to 1281 A.D.) Nara Hari Theertha built a temple within the precincts of Koormeswara, at Sri Kurmam, (Chicacole Taluq, Ganjam Dt.) and dedicated it to Yogananda Narasimha.

On a pillar of rock in this temple (east face) there are nine Sanskrit verses in various metres, setting forth that Sri Madhva was a Sishya of Purushottama Theertha (Achuta Preksha) and that Nara Hari Theertha was a *chela* of Sri Madhva. It refers to the vigorous rule of Nara Hari, to an expulsion of Sabaras in war, and to the founding of the said Yogananda Narisimha, in 1203 s. s. (*Vide* Inscription No. 290 of the Government Epigraphist's collection for 1896).

At the end of a spirited reign, Nara Hari Theertha obtained from the monarch to whom he restored the throne, the idols of Rama and Sita that had lain long unworshipped in the treasury of the palace. These are the images that are now held so sacred in our chief Mutts. Sri Madhva got them from Nara Hari Theertha, 3 months and 16 days before his final disappearance, and handed them down as invaluable heir-looms to his successors. Tradition invests these metallic images with peculiar sanctity. Their origin is traced to a period long anterior to Sri Ramachandra's rule, inasmuch as they were in the royal chapel of king Ikshwaku himself. Dasaratha kept them in Pooja before Sri Ramachandra was born, and Sita took them to her apartments to worship,

whenever Sri Rama was away from her on royal duties. The idols then happened to go over to Lakshmana's palace, and were there for a long time, until a strange incident occurred, in consequence of which, the images passed from the Royal family to the house of a Bhakta.

Sri Ramachandra was an ideal of perfection as he was an Avatar of the Lord. His subjects loved him with a whole-hearted devotion such as is not realisable even in imagination at this distance of time, living as we do, amidst the Kaliyug conditions of universal disorder marked by loose citizenship, feeble ties of love and duty, laxity of moral strength, irresolute faith in God and virtue, and absence of spirituality, in utter contrast with the harmony of the millenium that obtained in the golden days of Rama. It chanced that an old Brahmin was observing a vow that he would take no breakfast unless and until he had obtained a look at Sri Rama's face once a day. For this purpose, he used to wend his way, everyday, to the court or palace, or wherever else Rama might happen to be, obtain a vision, and go home to have the first meal of the day thereafter. On one occasion, Sri Rama did not attend the public court for a whole week no account of pressing engagements elsewhere. The Brahmin went to the court-house, day after day, and returned home, grief-striken and disappointed. He tasted not a drop of water during the period and he meant to lay down his life rather than violate his vow. Thus, eight days passed away, and on the ninth, the Brahmin, broken down by age and infirmity, repaired with tottering steps to the Royal presence. Sri Rama sat on the throne and was holding court, accessible to all his subjects. Overcome by the exhaustion of prolonged fast,

and by the excitement of finding Sri Rama at last, the .old man fell down on the floor, his weak frame succumbing to the delirium of joy. Sri Rama observed what happened and his infinite mercy was directed to him. Upon inquiry, the history of the man was disclosed. Sri Rama then commanded Lakshmana to give up to this sincere Bhakta the images in his house, and told the old man to keep them in worship, as he could no longer pay daily visits to the palace and be sure of his breakfast on the rigid terms of his vow. Thus, the long cherished idols of Rama and Sita passed to the Brahmin's possession. He worshipped them till his death. When the Brahmin was in death-bed, he summoned Hanuman to his house and handed the beloved idols to him. Hanuman hugged them to his bosom with tearful eyes, and kept them in worship for long ages, until the Avatar of Bheema, the great Hercules of Mahabharata. When Bheema was once rambling in the mountainous wilds of Gandhamadana to cull some supernatural flowers, he encountered Hanuman. The interview began with a trial of mutual strength, and ended in a warm greeting of friendship. At parting, Hanuman entrusted the images in question to Bheemasena. Thus, they remained in the Royal Palace of the Pandavas, and then of their successors, until the extinction of the dynasty in king Kshema Kanta. The images then passed on in some manner to the possession of the Gajapathy kings of Orissa, where they were in worship for a time, and then remained simply deposited in the treasury.

Sri Madhva knew the history of the images and longed to restore them to Pooja. He therefore ordered Nara Hari Theertha to secure them for him from the Gajapathy treasury.

The images are called Moola Rama and Sita *i.e* the original Rama and Sita, because they were anterior to Sri Rama's incarnation itself.

Chapters 12 to 15 of Adhyatma Ramayana, contains a full account of 'Moola Rama' and 'Sita' as set forth above, down to Nara Hari Theertha's episode including the delivery into Sri Madhva's hands.

To resume the thread of the narrative broken by this long digression about Nara Hari Theertha and the ancient images, let me remind the reader that it was many years after Sri Madhva first saw Nara Hari Theertha in Kalinga, that he met him again. Having left an injunction with this disciple that he should spend some years of useful public life, Sri Madhva left that country on his homeward journey. It does not appear that Sobhana Bhatta accompanied the Guru at this time. He evidently stayed behind and did valuable work by spreading the true Vaishnava faith in his part of the country. In him, the creed had a powerful and enthusiastic advocate, for, he combined erudition with sincere devotion. He braved whatever odium was attached to him by ignorant people as a renegade, and carried on a vigorous campaign of evangelisation. The Telugu Districts of the east coast evidently bore a rich harvest of results at the combined labours of Sobhana Bhatta and Nara Hari Theertha, both of whom were eminent personages well qualified for the great work of propagating the faith.

CHAPTER XIII.

REFORMS AT UDUPI.

Sri Madhva's return to Udupi was signalised by an ovation which his greatness richly deserved. Achuta Preksha had perused the advance copy of Sootra Bhashya that had been despatched to him. He had read it with absorbing interest, and had pondered over the knots of that singular treatise. He rejoiced to think of the great pupil who was covering himself with undying glory and fame, by his illustrious career. He took note of the march of events, and of the turn that religious thought was taking. He was proud of Sri Madhva, and welcomed him with sincere pleasure.

Many indeed were the hours spent together by Achuta Preksha and Sri Madhva, in discussing the moot points of the Bhashya, the tenability of the new system, its logic and its proofs, its aims and its ideals. Fond as he was, personally, of Sri Madhva, Achuta Preksha was fonder still of his early views, and could not be won over except by the most convincing reasoning. He still manfully stood by Adwaita, and pleaded long and earnestly for it. But he was a reasonable Pandit whose hesitation was honest, and who was open to conviction.

Sri Madhva was therefore able at last to prevail on him and make him accept the new Bhashya with faith.

The holy spot is still pointed out, where Sri Madhva sat and taught his pupils day after day, during his stay at Udupi. It is a space of 3 cubits square,

within the precincts of Ananteswera temple. There is no image or statue on the spot. It would appear that Vadiraja Yateendra tried once to instal a statue, but the Master appeared overnight, in a dream, and prohibited it. Hence that small area is left vacant, simply protected from trespass and desecration. The enclosure simply prevents a promiscuous treading.

In those days, this site was in the outer-most part of the temple buildings, fully exposed to light and air. But the temple has had additions since, so that the projecting mantapam has thrown Sri Madhva's favorite spot into shade and darkness. He is not at all likely to have chosen the spot for his daily discourses and lectures, if it was the ill-lighted and ill-ventilated place it looks at present.

No great memorial strikes the eye, no monument, no arches, no domes, such as is the fashion now-a-days to erect, with a view to coax time to spare its ravages. The visitor sees the place as Sri Madhva used it day after day, and propounded his system to eager throngs of people. There he sat, a picture of golden hue, covered with light divine, and radiant with inspiration. Those that came to scoff generally stayed to pray. Those who heard him, listened with a degree of attention so whole-hearted that their souls seemed thoroughly absorbed in, and overwhelmed by, the music of his ringing voice. He sat there, a commanding figure of perfect symmetry and beauty, and addressed the listeners in words of prophetic wisdom and revelation. He exhorted them to renounce Adwaita and worship God in reverence. He besought them to banish the delusion that man is or can be God—the delusion of a present or prospective identity with the Supreme Being, the vast

inaccessible gulf between the great God and puny man being an inconceivable infinity itself. He asked "when will Light be identified with darkness, Truth with delusion, knowledge with ignorance, atom with infinity, bliss with pain, absolute perfection with utter imperfection"?

Among the audience, there were, of course, listeners of various shades of belief. Some of them felt genuine faith penetrate the soul and become devoted converts. These prayed of Sri Madhva to stamp them as his followers, by the well-known marks of Vaishnava faith. They danced with joy to receive on their arms, abdomen, and chest, the branding marks of Chakra and Sankha, as the symbols of a true Vaishnava. Many were the Bhaktas who entered the fold in this manner and forsook their old beliefs and habits and opened a new chapter of life, forgetting and ignoring many an old association, rejecting and repudiating kith and kin if they refused to join, and behaving like men, fired and maddened by a supernatural influence. Sri Madhva taught Bhakti in words of burning earnestness and eloquence. He not only taught but lived a life of Bhakti with whole-hearted self surrender. He preached and practised divine worship with an intensity of feeling that was beyond description. He lived a life of austere self-abnegation and penance. His influence charged the atmosphere with an ozone of piety which men inhaled with a delirium of joyful thankfulness. Men felt that a great personality was moving in their midst, for a very great purpose.

They thought of him and talked of him incessantly in his absence. They longed to see him and hear him, and follow his foot-steps wherever he

went. Whenever Sri Madhva went to the sea for his bath and ablutions, a large gathering of devoted adherents assembled on the sands, and waited for Tulasi and holy water (Theertha.)

It was on one of these occasions, that a remarkable incident happened. One day, Sri Madhva started for the sea-bath in the small hours of the morning. As usual, he offered prayers to the Almighty, by reciting hymns in His praise. This day, it occurred to him, that he might himself compose a short book of Sonnets capable of being set to music. He began at once. As he walked to the sea-shore which is about 3 miles from Udupi, he composed verses with great ease. He sang in numbers, for the numbers came. They came unbidden out of surging emotions. The Muse was at his service and in her best form. Verse after verse flowed like honey, sweet and pithy. In a few hours, five chapters of about 46 verses were ready.

All this was obviously the result of a pre-sentiment. When the idea of composing "Dwadasa Stotram" occurred to him, Sri Madhva was intently thinking of Sri Krishna. It flashed to him that Sri Krishna was on his way to Udupi to settle down here, for the benefit of his Bhaktas. He felt a strong pre-sentiment that the day would turn out most memorable to Udupi, and that before sun-down, the Grace of the Almighty would bless this place in a special manner.

This pre-vision elated his spirits, and facilitated the flow of prayerful music. He danced mentally to the tune of the divine music, and sang on, absent-mindedly, during all the ablutions.

At last, he went to the sands, and sat down for further meditation. While thus engaged, he opened his eyes suddenly, and they lighted upon a ship in distress. It was a merchant-man from Dwaraka laden with costly merchandise. The Master saw that the ship had got out of hand and was drifting at the mercy of the waves. At length, it got stranded in a sandbank, so that all the skilled efforts of the sailors proved ineffectual to redeem her from peril

Sri Madhva understood the distress of the unhappy vessel and resolved to save her. Taking up his handkerchief, he waved it at the ship, intending that she should float and sail to the shore. And sure enough, the ship did float and sail, and was soon beyond danger. A general shout of rejoicing and welcome greeted the merchantman, as she touched the haven in safety. The master of the ship approached the Guru with profound gratitude, and begged of him to accept some return. Sri Madhva cared not for treasure, abundantly as it was offered. He said " there are some clods of earth known as "Gobichandan" in your vessel: give me some pieces thereof. I am content." The merchant obeyed with alacrity, and many large pieces were at once fetched. The beholders watched the development of affairs with intense interest.

One of the pieces was particularly large and heavy. Sri Madhva ordered it to be carried with care to his Mutt. There were many persons accompanying him on this occasion.

When the clod was brought about one or two furlongs, on the way home, it broke in twain and disclosed to view a magnificent image of Sri Krishna. It

No 5.
"Sri Madhva looked at the figure and became transfixed with emotion"
—Page 139

was a lovely statue of Balakrishna holding a churning rod in one hand and a churning rope in .the other.

Sri Madhva looked at the figure and became transfixed with emotion. The pre-sentiment was fulfilled. Sri Krishna had come from Dwaraka among the clods of the ship's ballast. He had lain unworshipped for centuries on the shores of Dwaraka and had at last wended his way to Udupi, to bless Sri Madhva and and his disciples.

Then flowed the continuation of verses from chapter six, with a ring of redoubled thrill. Hereafter Sri Madhva addressed the Lord, as if face to face with him with telling appeals for grace. He filled the poem with choruses, so that groups of men might take part in the soul-stirring dance. Chapters 6 to 12 were completed in the course of this day.

The spot where the clod broke, is known as Vadabandeswara. There is a temple of Balarama at the place.

The image thus miraculously obtained was taken to Udupi and washed at the tank known as Madhva Sarowara. When all the sticking pieces of earth were removed, a large gathering of people came to see the image. Rays of effulgent light radiated from the image, by reason of the divine presence induced by Sri Madhva's touch.

Sri Madhva ordered his attendants to carry the image with care to his Mutt. They approached the idol and tried to lift it. It was too heavy. Some more joined. Still it could not be lifted. Thirty stalwart men tried all their strength, in vain. Sri Krishna remained immoveable. Sri Madhva ordered them to leave it alone. It was Sri Krishna's pleasure that Sri Madhva himself should carry him. He lifted the

image with both hands and carried it with reverence to his lodging. The day was one of universal joy and prayer for the people. Sri Krishna had come into their midst under circumstances of peculiar significance. The inhabitants of Udupi deemed themselves doubly blessed by the combined presence of Madhava and Madhva.

To build a small temple and enshrine the Diety therein was a labour of love soon accomplished. The purse strings of religious charity have never been tight in this country and Sri Madhva had no difficulty at all in finding the requisite funds. He did not desire to build a palatial edifice with towers and turrets as in Srirangam. He might have done so, had he chosen; for, princes would have contributed for it. But he was bent on raising a simple shrine with none of the imposing triumphs of architectural show.

Having installed Sri Krishna of the churning rod and rope, in this little and simple temple, Sri Madhva inaugurated and regulated the method and formulæ of worship. He codified the procedure in the minutest details, and led the way, by conducting the ritual of worship, in person.

Those who have closely watched the ceremonials at the Krishna temple of Udupi, the routine observed, the postures and prayers at every step, the Vedas chanted, the songs sung, those who have experienced the thrill that suffuses even a free-thinker if he visits the place, are in a position to admire the wonderful sagacity and fore-thought of the great Founder in organising and regulating the unique system of worship that obtains in Udupi.

Sri Madhva's dedication of his life to Sri Krishna, alloting every hour of the day, and every moment

of the hour, to some religious act betokening or symbolizing love and service, was a powerful protest against the vanities of the world, against the aimless projects and ambitions that fill up the little span of the average human life. Sri Krishna is the goal of humanity, and whatever diverts attention from the goal, a tiny flower in a bye-lane, a blushing fruit in a way-side orchard, some little laugh, some petty merriment, mere bubbles that burst at a prick, sends the goal out of sight, and seriously delays the journey of man.

Life's stream glides along surely and quickly enough. In some cases, it makes more or less noise. It passes through tracts of various extents. In all cases, it empties itself in an abyss, carrying down with it, honors, distinctions, and titles, to a region where they are unacknowledged. Sri Madhva exhorted, as other prophets did before and have done since, that being born with the light of reason, man ought not to forget the goal, and let himself be diverted by the way-side temptations of shiny but ephemeral roses. He exhorted men to think of the Spirit, and the spiritual power of humanity, by which God intends mankind to rise beyond their mortal encasement. He exhorted men to acknowledge God as the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, of the Universe, adore the redundant plenitude of his perfections, and rely on his goodness, fear his justice, and aspire to heavenly immortality.

Sri Madhva carried these exhortations into practice in order that his life may be a glowing object-lesson to all Bhaktas. Having installed Sri Krishna in a temple, he constituted himself into a Poojari, whose time and all, were unreservedly at the Lord's service. He did not allow Sri Krishna's worship to

be desecrated by a mercenary agency, as is the case too often in the temples of this country, just now. He allotted and appropriated Sri Krishna so thoroughly to himself that he regarded every interference as a usurpation of his privilege. Nine times in the day, an elaborate programme of worship and prayers was followed by Sri Madhva. Every honor that man could devise to symbolise allegiance and devotion to the Soveriegn of the universe, was paid to Sri Krishna, day after day.

He guarded the temple from unclean touch and impure contact of every kind. Promiscuous entry with unwashed legs and unbathed persons was impossible. The Sanctum was advisedly too narrow for a crowd to enter. It had no accommodation for any but the High-priest and an attendant or two. Impure touch was rendered impossible by the wise provision that the High Priest should conduct the worship in person and after bath. The ritual laid down involved perpetual cleaning of the precincts and premises, and an incessant scouring and washing of the utensils. While approaching the shrine, one feels forcibly impressed by the physical purity of the environments, and is led on unconsciously to a sense of holiness and piety. It is easy enough to denounce idolatry and profess to be an iconoclast. It is easier still to condemn the practice of offerings, on the argument that the Supreme Being is utterly beyond want. Alas ! the iconoclasts of this fashion miss the point or purposes of true idolatry altogether. They fail to realise what powerful aids images are for concentration. Human thoughts allowed to roam about to catch an abstraction, seldom attain the object. We think in pictures and forms, and whenever the picture or the form is vague, the

mental grasp is feeble To conceive of the Formless and fix it in the mind is an impossibility. Let every devotee who wishes for Yoga, the heárt's union with God, conceive a form for the Almighty and treasure it in his heart, prepetuate it in a thousand ways, giving it shapes physical, and shapes mental, treasure them in the box and imbed them on memory, worship them with choice offerings and adore them with choice prayers, he will soon realise what a rapid progress he makes in Yoga, as contrasted with the vague, elusive state of things in trying to worship an impersonal God.

When great minds seek to invoke God in an image, for the purposes of worship, God does grant the prayer by making that vehicle an object of His special presence. Images intently worshipped like the Sri Krishna's image at Udupi or the Mula Ramachandra of the Mutts, for instance, are aglow with a supernatural halo induced by the magnetic prayers of great souls.

It was indeed a happy idea of Sri Madhva's, to ordain 8 ascetics, put them each in charge of a separate mutt, and make them jointly and severally responsible for the Poojas and festivals of Sri Krishna's temple. This was the most effectual and practicable means of ensuring the perpetual continuance of worship in the shrine. These ascetics discharge their trust honourably and faithfully by each of them taking charge of the temple, under a well-regulated system of rotation.

In spite of vicissitudes attributable to various causes, such as the natural degeneracy of the times, increasing worldliness, and bloated wealth, it must be acknowledged to the credit of the 8 Udupi Sanyasins, that, to this day, they have kept up, Sri Krishna's wor-

ship in its glory, almost as Sri Madhva ordained it, and that no ascetic who succeeded to the charge ever failed to devote all his time, all his energies, and all his resources, to the service of the Lord during his regime. It is the pride of every Mâdhva that the high priests of the Udupi temple are men of a wholly different calibre from other temple priests, and that the atmosphere of this shrine is wholly different in character from other shrines, by reason of the holy thrill, the pious flutter, the calm peace, the suffusing joy, that the soul is filled with, when the Bhakta enters the place and sees what is going on.

Sri Madhva laid the greatest emphasis on personal cleanliness as the first and foremost condition of every religious observance. A plunge-bath in water was recommended as highly meritorious. It was insisted that the dress after a bath should be clothes washed and dried and scrupulously secured from contact with other clothes and the touch of unclean hands. Unwashed silks which are so popular among certain sections of Brahmins as holy clothing are condemned by Mâdhvas. The ideas of personal purity as a qualification for religious practices are so elaborately, minutely, and logically, designed and worked out, that Madhvas, and more especially their women-folk, are known to go to ridiculous lengths in their touch-me-not exclusiveness. At Udupi, one realises the purposes and value of the sacred injunction that Sri Krishna's worship should be thoroughly free from the least taint of uncleanliness and impurity. The ascetic-in-charge, puts himself under special vows of fasting and penance, and leads, for a period of two years during which he conducts the Pooja, a special life of piety. Thus approached and thus worshipped, how can Sri Krishna in his

infinite mercy, help investing this shrine with His Presence in a marked degree, and illuminating the lives of the Faithful with Bhakti and bliss? If tradition be honest and reliable, the monks who take charge of Sri Krishna by rotation, are so many Gopees of Brindavan, who moved with and loved Sri Krishna with an indescribable intensity of feeling, and are taking re-births now for the privilege of worshipping Him. These monks conduct themselves as if they are living and moving with Sri Krishna himself, in flesh and blood; so completely do they forget the image, and so thoroughly do they assimilate the Lord into their consciousness. Sri Krishna presiding here being a boy, they feed him in the forenoon with choice offerings and distribute the same among the boys before 9 or 10 A. M. At midday, they do the great Pooja of the day and the *prasad* is distributed among the guests, who sometimes number many hundreds. They keep an open door of hospitality to all that seek to have the holy *prasad*. The evening Pooja is a repetition of the morning service. The Leelas of Sri Krishna are perpetuated in festivities distributed throughout the year. They dance before the Lord of Love to the tune of music, chanting the chapters of Dwadasa Stotram or other songs of an elevating character. As the chant proceeds, and the dance goes on, the hair stands on end tears flow from the eyes, and the brain is on fire with emotion. Some of the devotees more emotional than others swoon away, overpowered by memories of Sri Krishna's wonderful Leelas.

Sri Madhva originated all this, and led the way by an example of devotion, that was without a parallel. He taught, by example more than by precept, that no pursuit of the worldly-wise is in fact worthy

of ambition, and that life, if worth living at all, should be devoted and dedicated utterly and absolutely to the Maker of all.

People came from far and near, to see and be saved. Need it be said that old Advaita lost ground in this country and that the theory of identity with God-head, or the theory of illusion, had not the ghost of a chance among people thus inspired by the loftiest example of prayerful Bhakti ever manifested before mortal eyes. The revolution of ideas was however not universal. There were still remnants of the old orthodoxy, who refused to accept the Guru as the true exponent of the Vedic teachings. These men were so many proofs of Sri Madhva's tenet that souls were divisible into three classes according to their innate worth. For, he taught that some souls must get into Bhakti without effort, others are swayed by a mixture of virtues and vices, and others still, show a constant undivertible leaning towards vice, irreligion, heresy, antipathy of God, and everything that makes for descent and degradation. Casting a glance at the world around us, one surely is struck at the plenitude of proofs that bear out this truth ; however disagreeable the doctrine may be to human vanity.

When Sri Madhva stayed at Udupi, busily engaged in founding the temple and establishing Sri Krishna-worship on an organised and well-regulated basis, his younger brother was a frequent visitor of his Mutt and used to make long stays at Udupi on some engagement or other. The school-mate, who, it may be remembered, was a favourite friend of Sri Madhva during his pupilage in the village school,— no other than the teacher's son whose headache was cured by Sri Madhva's breath, had settled in Udupi,

and was now an influential townsman. The bond of early friendship had not snapped during the years that had gone by, but had become greatly strengthened by the course of events.

It happened that this friend started a great *Yagna* (sacrifice), in which he purposed to spend much money, feed thousands of Brahmins, and perform a course of Vedic rites on an elaborate scale. In this undertaking, Sri Madhva's younger brother occupied an important post as the officiating priest (Hotri). When the preparations were in progress, pandals got ready, moneys advanced, and other things presumably done, one Jaraghatita (Mooradithaya in vernacular) plotted against the "sacrifice" and successfully threw obstacles in the way. Owing to his opposition, it became impossible to gather the requisite materials and find the necessary functionaries for a successful celebration. The master of the ceremonies and his Hotri, found themselves in a hopeless fix, as they were not capable of overcoming Jaraghatita's opposition. They appealed to Sri Madhva in the dilemma, and prayed to be extricated.

It is not clear who this Jaraghatita was, or how he happened to wield so much influence in the locality as to thwart honest men in their innocent pursuits. Nor is it clear in what manner the promoters of the "sacrifice" could have offended Jara's susceptibilities. It is possible that this *Yagna* originated an innovation by dispensing with living animals as sacrificial victims, and finding a flour-substitute in their place. The prevailing practice was to slaughter animals by a process of slow torture. The idea of the torture was revolting to Sri Madhva, who therefore directed a

powerful attack against animal slaughter in or out of sacrifices. The result is that Madhvas have given up this practice altogether and in their *yagnas* it is only animal-form made of rice-flour, that does duty for the live-victim.

Jaraghatita was perhaps a Dikshitar of the Smartha community, who commanded a large following and watched the turn of events with alarm and spite. The Government of those days was not argus-eyed enough to take note of caste squabbles and village strifes and secure to honest folk a freedom from petty tyrannies. Hence this marplot was able to bring things to a stand-still, and Sri Madhva had to be appealed to.

The Guru summoned a large gathering of the local leaders and officials. To make amends for the loose grip of the reign of law, the Village Panchayat was then correspondingly powerful to adjust differences and provide remedies. Justice as well as Sri Madhva's influence weighed with them, and their decision broke down Jara's opposition. Under the protection of the village autonomy, the interrupted preparations were resumed and the *Yagna* proceeded with. It was, of course, a festive occasion for the Brahmins, with an incessant round of Vedic chantings and sumptuous feastings. As mentioned already, the school-friend and the younger brother of Sri Madhva, both distinguished themselves, by their hospitality, organisation, and scriptural lore, in this great "sacrifice".

By this time, Sri Madhva had made a long stay at Udupi. He had struck a deep note of reform by his teachings and had shaken the old order of things to its foundation. He had set men thinking earnestly and seriously. The foundation was thus well and truly laid

for further work. Leaving the forces set in motion to work their way, and confident of happy results, Sri Madhva resolved to undertake a second tour to the Himalayas for paying respects to the great Vyasa of the Badari hermitage.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SECOND TOUR TO BADARI.

Pandit Narayana Acharya, the author of the well-known work 'Sri Madhva Vijaya' has acknowledged his obligations to a poet of the Chola country for an account of Sri Madhva's tour through Northern India. It is evident that during the life-time of the Guru himself, the chief events of his career were chronicled by some disciple or disciples and published among the *elite* of the new faith by means of public recitations.

The chronicles were however mere skeletons of Sri Madhva's doings, by no means offering a connected narrative of his life and furnishing no true insight into the real nature of the Acharya's work. The biographer is thrown not a little upon his imagination to fill up the gaps of the outline, and convey an idea of the solid work of the great Reformer in the length and breadth of India.

Sri Madhva performed miracles and marvels, undoubtedly, to impress people with a sense of his greatness and pave the way for a large acceptance of his reform. But miracles were not the kernel of his life-work. One wishes ardently to know about the people he addressed, the language he used, the winged words of fire that he spoke, the methods by which he metamorphosed indifference into ardour, resuscitated spiritual life, filled the dry bones of fossil beliefs with vitality, and invested life with a meaning and a purpose hitherto unrealized even by scholars. In short, one is eager to trace the history of his great Reformation from its insignificant beginnings through all its ramifications. Although

Vaishnavaism was not unknown before, it received an impetus from Sir Madhva's unique personality and propagation, a unifying impetus it had not possessed before. To Sri Madhva, more than to any other religious reformer of recent times, belonged the credit of enthroning religion once more on common sense, and purging Vedantism of mystic over-growths. It was he who rendered it possible for men that adored the ancient scriptures of India to accept their authority, and still worship the Supreme Being in the right spirit. To those who felt a sort of innate conviction that God should never be worshipped as an equal, who felt puzzled by conflicting texts some of which seemed to support strange doctrines,—who had not the courage to set the texts at naught and felt them a veritable nightmare choking their consciences, Sri Madhva afforded enormous relief by dislodging the nightmare from their conscience, and proving how all the venerated texts of ancient authority pointed to the same goal as common sense and right reason did. In accomplishing this result, Sri Madhva visited every important place in India. Some well-known centres of learning, he visited, more than once. He made prolonged stays in places like Benares, and diffused his teachings far and wide. History furnishes very meagre information about the dates and events of Sri Madhva's tours. It is more meagre still, about the personages with whom he came in contact, and whom he caused to be the instruments of further propagation. That he left well-marked footprints of his individuality wherever he went, is quite evident from the fact, that Vaishnavaism, as he presented it, took deep roots in Bengal and Northern India in his time. His methods were thoroughly peaceful. He left kings severely alone. He never

used them as instruments to force his faith down the throats of unwilling men. He cared not to use fulminations royal and priestly, and to secure a following. He evinced no anxiety to swell his greatness by the weight of numbers. He was indifferent to fame, wealth, influence, and whatever else is generally desired by pushful reformers. He passively permitted his towering personality to dispel ignorance, and allowed his great example to impress men's minds. He freely discussed and discoursed on great topics with leading Pandits, and let men pursue the bent of their own inclinations and convictions. The History of this Reformation is a refreshing record of peaceful incidents, standing out in religious history as a remarkable contrast to the bloody revolutions elsewhere, marked by rivers of human blood and blazing bonfires of martyrs. He cared not for the artificial aid of aristocratic influence. Nor did he care to swell his ranks by indiscriminate conversions. He was content to teach where genuine people were eager to learn, and left results in the hands of God. He led an humble life such as befits ascetics who have renounced the world, never hesitated to travel as a pedestrian, mingled freely and on terms of cordial fellowship with pupils, servants, and followers, and set up no barriers of exclusiveness between himself and the people as a sign of priestly eminence. In short, Sri Madhva was a hero in the truest sense of the term, one, whose greatness was goodness in essence, whose cult was no cant, whose message was peace, whose word was gospel, whose breath was light, whose personality, was imposing and inspiring.

Since his first tour to Badari, Sri Madhva had accomplished a great deal. His Bhashya had been

received with a grateful chorus of welcome. His views had commanded admiration and homage. The grace of God was quite manifest in the success that invariably crowned his efforts. It was evident that God did not intend Sri Madhva to shut himself up in a corner of Canara, and hide his light in a bushel. He interpreted his own wish to go to Badari as a Divine call that was meant to bless thousands of Baktas scattered on the route. He therefore set out from Udupi with his chief followers. His staff consisted of no hired service. It comprised pupils and adherents who were eager to die in his service and attain Heaven as the only reward. But the retinue thus constituted was by no means poor in number or strength. This time, it contained not less than 50 able-bodied attendants, besides a number of ascetic pupils. Ascetic Satya Theertha was an inevitable member of the party, for, he invariably followed Sri Madhva like a shadow. Upendra Theertha was another pupil who travelled with him on this occasion. There were others too.

It would be of interest to the reader if the date of this tour could be fixed with any degree of certainty. Of all the great gurus that played a part in the religious history of this country, Sri Madhva appears to have been one who studiously gave kings a wide berth, as far as possible. He never voluntarily threw himself into royal company and rarely came into conflict with rulers or governors, either in his tours or in Canara. He was such a wholly self-absorbed yogin, that, naturally enough, he and politics were poles apart. Contemporary history dealing with kings and battles is of no avail to Sri Madhva's biographer in fixing the chronology of the various incidents in the life of the Guru. Side-lights shedding

a passing flash, appear now and again, but they are so evanescent, and momentary as to be more perplexing than illuminating.

If the reader will pardon a bit of conjceture, I am inclined to put Sri Madhva's second tour to Badari, at some time between 1260 and 1271 A. D. Sri Madhva evidently passed through the Kingdom of Doulatabad *alias* Devagiri, when the ruler thereof was one Iswara Deva or Mahadeva, a Yadava king who ruled at Devagiri from 1260-1271, and had a prosperous kingdom including Kandesh. He was a usurper, whose son Amana was ousted by Rama Deva (1271 to 1309). It was during the reign of Rama Deva and of his son Sankara Deva that Alauddin made descents into this province, and carried away an immense plunder. When Sri Madhva was passing through Maharashtra, King Mahadeva was the regining monarch. The country had not yet got into the throes of Muhammadan inroads and convulsions.

This King had evidently very queer notions of beneficence. He had no objection to public works of charity, provided his coffers were not called upon to contribute. He undertook so-called works of public utility, and carried them out by enforced labour. When Sri Madhva was passing through Maharashtra with a large retinue, it happened that the king was getting a big tank dug for the people. He was taking such a keen interest in the work that he personally supervised the operations. He caught hold of any idler in the town, any wayfarer or traveller that passed, and forced him to take up the pick-axe and contribute labour. When the Guru's party chanced to pass, the mandate was given for Sri Madhva and

his followers to take up the pick-axe and work away. The Acharya was seriously inconvenienced by the halt, and found no easy way out of the difficulty. The king was inexorable in his orders. Sri Madhva went up boldly, and sought an interview with the king, and addressed him. He had to requisition the aid of subtle mystic forces to extricate himself from the situation. He found thousands of people at work, not day-labourers and coolies, but men, good, bad, and indifferent, impressed into service by an arbitrary edict of enforced and unpaid labour. It looked as if their curse had brought Sri Madhva to the spot, in order to work out a nemesis for the tyrant. Appearing before the king, Sri Madhva told him that he and his men were quite prepared to obey his edict. He added that he and his men were raw novices for the task, and that he would be thankful to have the process taught by royal example. The Guru spoke so as to hypnotise the king, and reduced him into obedience. The suggestion took effect, and the great man took up an axe and began to dig, just to set an example and show the way. But Sri Madhva had wound up a subtle mechanism in his heart, so that the hypnotic impetus continued to propel the royal hands and dominate the royal will till late in the evening. When Mahadeva, the ruler of a powerful state, was digging away with a promiscuous crowd of workmen, forgetful of his position, and forgetful of why and wherefore he should do so, Sri Madhva smiled with humour at the pathos of the situation, and left with his party, unnoticed by the royalty thus engaged in manual labour. The moral of the episode is so plain that he who runs may read it. It was a duel between a ruler of men and a ruler of hearts; in this, the former was vanquished by the

latter with no waste of powder and smoke, a result just what it might be expected to be in such an unequal match. King Mahadeva, the tyrannical usurper of the Devagiri throne, being no better than hewers of wood and drawers of water, found his level, for once, when his impertinence assailed a superhuman rock, and reverberated against himself into a very unpleasant echo.

Sri Madhva's party pursued their journey in peace through many a Hindu state until they reached the Ganges. Here, the journey was interrupted by serious impediments, physical and political. The Ganges, at the point where he wished to ford it, was the dividing line between Hindu and Muhammadan sovereignties. On both banks of the river, edicts were in force prohibiting mutual communication. There were no boats available at all for transhipment across the stream which was too deep and too wide for any pedestrian or swimmer. Inveterate hostility and jealousy was the pivot of political relations between the neighbouring states, so that, the sovereigns on either bank lived in perpetual dread of the spy, and resorted to absurd precautions to ward off the obnoxious parasite.

North of the Ganga, Jalaluddin held sway, the uncle of Alauddin shortly to distinguish himself by wading in blood to the Khilji throne of Delhi. Some Hindu prince reigned south of the river, a prey to ceaseless fear and torment at the neighbourhood of an alien power which was growing in strength beyond measure. Sri Madhva reached the Ganges at this juncture, and found that no boats were available for love or money to tide him over the floods. He found besides, a prohibitory bann proclaiming pains and penalties for

any Hindu that dared to cross the river and set foot on the further bank. A ferocious regiment of soldiers that knew no bowels of compassion, lay in wait at the opposite bank, to give the offenders of this regulation, a smart reception. On being told that the river could not be crossed, Sri Madhva resolved to defy the laws, both physical and political, and ford the river. He told his followers to hold one another by hands, and descend boldly into the current. He himself held the hand of the foremost man of the train, and led the party into the surging gulf. A miracle tided them over the deep, similar to the one ordained by Sri Krishna when Vasudeva carried the Divine babe across the Jumna into Yasoda's room. And these followers of Sri Madhva! the mind reels at the effort to realise their faith and trust in the Guru when they plunged into the abyss without hesitation at the Guru's bidding, and paid not a moment's thought to the consequences. It was an ideal obedience, such as even soldiers are not capable of. Sri Madhva was their leader, and they chose to follow him, wherever he might take them. By their implicit trust, they were saved, as saved will assuredly be, everybody that places trust in him. For, the scriptures declare that the deity 'Vayu' whose incarnation was Sri Madhva, is the appointed leader who takes all Bhaktas in hand, and guides them into the Presence of the Supreme Being. Vayu is the great boat to navigate the wave-tossed souls across the ocean of births and rebirths to the haven of Peace, to the haven of God, to be finally released by the Divine grace. Those that confide in, and cling to, his guidance are true Vaishnavas, who have no difficulty in tiding over the surging waves. To those that could read its meaning, the incident of

the Ganges was an illustration of this truth, an ocular demonstration of an invisible phenomenon, tellingly suggestive of Sri Madhva's greatness.

Thus the unfordable river was crossed and the shore reached in safety. When the party set foot on Muhammadan soil, a terrible yell of the guards barred the way. The soldiers obstructed the travellers, and threatened to seize them, and kill every one, for disobedience of royal orders. But Sri Madhva was quite equal to the occasion. He spoke to the soldiers without fear, and told them calmly that he was no spy. He assured them that, instead of avoiding the king, he would go straight to the king and seek an audience. The soldiers yielded without further parley. The marvel of the fording had probably impressed them already with awe and reverence, so that, they were not prepared to use violence if they could help it. Sri Madhva's word gave assurance of the peaceful character of the travellers, and set the soldiers' conscience at rest. The party was therefore allowed to proceed.

But the danger was not yet fully passed. The monarch had to be faced, the Mussalman ruler of Delhi, with his inveterate hatred of Hinduism and serious distrust of alien visitors. The lion had to be bearded in the den. It might turn out a ferocious lion with none of the refined instincts with which the royal beast is sometimes credited. Sri Madhva had however no fear.

The throne was just then in the possession of Jalaluddin Khilji, the uncle of Alauddin. This monarch was a peaceful sovereign who had ascended the throne at the age of 70 and signalized his reign by no more than a single murder. He ruled the country with

mercy and kindness, and was a great patron of learning. In his time, Delhi was a point of attraction to literary geniuses of every description. Ameer Kushroo, the famous Persian poet, one of the sweetest poets of that tongue, was the king's librarian. Simple and unassuming in habits, the king moved freely with the people, and showed kindness and forgiveness even to his enemies. When goaded by courtiers to acts of sternness, accustomed as they were to bloodshed and butcheries in the name of statecraft, the king, it is said, refused to sanction, saying "My friend! I am now old and weak, and I wish to go down to the grave without shedding more blood." Chronology and probability point to Jalaluddin as the Muhammadan king whom Sri Madhva interviewed. When they were brought face to face, the king opened conversation by expressing surprise at the miraculous fording of the river and the still more miraculous escape from the hands of his soldiery. Sri Madhva replied with dignity, addressing the sovereign in elegant Persian. The patron of letters was struck by the sage's accomplishments. He was charmed by Sri Madhva's superhuman beauty and dignity. He saw before him a human form of transcendent loveliness, a figure of gorgeous light, that shed a mellifluous charm around, and subdued hostility. The king had not the heart to associate this Divinely attractive personage with sinister thoughts. When Sri Madhva spoke, it was the ring of a sweet-toned bell, that enhanced a thousand times the charm of the Persian he mouthed. The attitude of mutual distrust with which the interview began, soon gave place to confidence Before a few words had been exchanged, the king became warm and cordial, expressing a deep veneration for the great sage that stood before him.

What Sri Madhva said remains a mystery. Nor is it easy to say how long he had audience of the king. It is said, that, actuated by the highest reverence, the king ended by offering a rich jaghir amounting to half the province, but that the sage declined it with thanks. Sri Madhva had gone into the palace, a political offender in expectation of condign punishment, but came out of it, an honoured guest of the king. Human or superhuman, the incidents deserve a calm reflection. They seem to reflect great credit on Sri Madhva for wisdom and tact, to say the least.

Numerous are the anecdotes told about the frequent encounters that Sri Madhva's party had with dacoits in the course of the journey. Often, had they to cross thick forests and rugged hill-tops. Security of life and property was poor enough even on the plains and in the inhabited parts, but it was almost unknown in remote regions. Northern India in the middle ages was torn by internecine splits and strifes, open warfare and secret rebellions, murders for power and murders for pelf, political loot and the robbers' loot. In this state of disorder and insecurity, pilgrimages were however undertaken without fear, and accomplished, from one end of the continent to the other. The impetus of sturdy faith apparently lent unusual courage to these travellers. Madhva Vijaya refers to three several encounters, in which large gangs of robbers had to be faced by Sri Madhva's party. On one occasion, Sri Madhva threw among the robbers, to avert an attack, a ball made of his cloths. It looked a veritable ball of gold in the eyes of the robbers. They eagerly tried to seize it, every one of them. The enormous nugget bestirred mutual hatred, disunion,

and scrambling, so that the thieves drew swords upon one another actuated by the fiercest greed. Sri Madhva's party was simply looking on. Intense greed of gold had brought the gang together, and now, it was the same intense greed that destroyed every member of the gang and rid the highway of that human pestilence. To all who could read the moral, it furnished a vivid object-lesson of bestirred passions working their worst.

On another occasion, a hundred thieves stopped this party. The situation was dreadful; when lo! Ascetic Upendra rushed forward and wrested a sword from one of the robbers. He fought with such skill and courage as would have done credit to any veteran swordsman. The thieves were staggered by Upendra's prowess and pluck. His sword did terrible execution by well-aimed attacks and parryings. Never had this peaceful monk wielded a sword in his life. But he showed this day extraordinary skill and bravery, to the great astonishment of everybody that knew him. Pitted against odds and fighting against a hundred well-armed desperadoes, Upendra Theertha showed himself a match for their united strength, and earned the gratitude of his companions by routing the gang after inflicting a signal defeat upon them. Everybody opened his eyes wide in surprise to see if what was happening was a reality or a dream. They had known Upendra Theertha all their life, and had not seen him wield a stick. They had moved with him intimately and had never seen him rise above the dead level of timidity characterising the members of the society to which he belonged. This day, he suddenly bloomed into a soldier, a veritable Hercules of strength, thrusting, parrying, and hitting, as if he had been used to it all

his life. The surprise was, however, only for a moment. The Sishyas turned round to Sri Madhva and they saw that it was all his doing. It was the great Acharya that had infused his Bhima strength into Upendra's arms. Upendra fought like one possessed, and surely he was in fact possessed, for a moment, of extraordinary prowess, from the volition of the great Master.

On a third occasion, another gang made a descent on this party. It would appear that, this time, every member of Sri Madhva's party appeared, to the robbers' vision, an unmoving boulder of rock. The robbers rubbed their eyes in surprise and stared. Soon the boulders began to move. The thieves were staggered by a phenomenon for which they were quite unprepared. As they were still gazing, the the moving stones reappeared as men treading the road as ordinary travellers. Surprise gave way to awe. Forgetting and forsaking their wicked intent, the gang fell prostrate at the Guru's feet and begged pardon. Blessed indeed were these men that they stumbled into this company to meet Sri Madhva face to face and solicit his blessing and benediction. It may be presumed that the wicked marauders turned a new chapter of life from this remarkable incident.

In passing through wilds and jungles, the indigenous residents thereof, tigers, lions, and others of their ilk, added their terrors too, to those of marauding free-booters. Poor Satya Theertha who was going forward leading the way was once suddenly pounced upon by a tiger. He would have been made a hearty meal of, but for Sri Madhva's timely intervention. The sage hit the tiger with his fist and saved the disciple. It was a touch rather than a blow, that

despatched the brute. Satya Theertha emerged from the jaws and claws of death, a picture of despair and fear, trembling like an aspen leaf from head to foot, his brain on fire and vividly alive only to a single idea, viz., that of the monster of terrible claws slaughtering him in its embrace. It took the timid monk some time before he realized his rescue and safety. He saw and understood that the tiger lay a corpse, and that himself so recently in its grip, was safe by the grace of his Acharya. To prostrate out of surging thankfulness, was only a spontaneous duty, and this, he performed with tearful eyes, coupling it with an earnest prayer that Sri Madhva might save him thus and always, in order that he, Satya Theertha, might be a devoted, inseparable, servant, companion, and follower, of the Guru for ever. This was the only privilege for the sake of which he held life precious and dear, and he therefore prayed for the boon of inseparable service at the lotus feet of Sri Madhva.

In due time, the Himalayan range came into sight. Sri Madhva entered again into the wilds, and hastened to the Great Badarayana. He met the hoary sage, underneath the Badari tree, and fell prostrate at the feet of the Lord. O! the joy of the hour. It was bliss ineffable, happiness too deep for words, what Sri Madhva felt condensed and crowded in his soul. He was literally beside himself to be face to face with the Almighty, once again. He could always count upon a cordial welcome at this hermitage, and he was never disappointed. He was accorded the foremost rank among Vyasa's disciples, with the approval of the Lord. For a while, he forgot his life in the plains, the ties he had bound himself with, the joys and sorrows he had simulated in his *leelas* amidst wordly environments.

Could any one conceive anything more peaceful and blissful than a stay at Badari, face to face with the wild immensity of the loftiest panoramas of nature, with a solitude at once grand and impressive, a retirement far from the turmoil of human passions, a silence pregnant with calmness and repose, disturbed only, if at all, by the chirping music of birds in ecstasy, of domesticated deer leaping from boulder to boulder? The effects of the scenery so imposing and impressive, so full of peace, and so suggestive of quiet, balmy breaths of fragrance, rippling pools of crystalline waters, conveying to the soul a delirious sense of relief and release, a sense of happy antithesis to conditions obtaining everywhere else, were enhanced a million-fold by the choice companionship of spiritual friends, sages, and Mahatmas, inhabiting and enjoying the splendid solitude of nature. To crown all, there was the Lord from whom radiated a light Divine, to bless everything, and everybody, to kindle joy in the breast of man and brute, to animate the vegetable and mineral kingdoms too, into a spontaneous outburst of exhilaration. Where is Vykunta, if not at spots like these? Sri Madhva felt it to be Vykunta, the abode of unalloyed bliss, his soul stirred up to its inmost depths with the profoundest feelings of joy and Bhakti. It may be presumed that Sri Madhva had no wish to cut short his sojourn. He was in no hurry to bid adieu to a place the nearest and dearest to his heart, which combined everything he prized and loved, which summed up the goal of his heart's utmost longings. Vyasa let him stay and study for a time, and then gently reminded him of his mission. Sri Madhva was incapable of being indifferent to the call of duty.

It is due to this visit, that eight Saligrams of rare value came into Sri Madhva's possession. They

are said to be presents made by Vyasa to his favourite pupil. Saligrams are worshipped in India as stones of peculiar merit, as the special abode of Vishnu. The orthodox read the various configurations of circles in the gaping mouths or simple holes of the Saligram stones, and identify the tracings as representing some form of Vishnu.

Before starting from Badari, Sri Madhva was honoured with eight stones representing Vyasamoorthy and he received them with great devotion and thankfulness.

The great epitome of Mahabharata, written by our Acharya and known as Sriman Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya is also traced to this visit.

Dear reader, I assure you that Mahabharata is the most remarkable book in the world. It is a huge book strikingly original in design, strikingly vast and comprehensive in its scope. To lay minds, it looks like a book of fairy tales, full of imagination and fancy, but a story-book all the same. They admire its stupendous size, its fervid imagination, its glowing pictures, its masterly flow, and note that it is a great epic as great as Homer's, if not greater. We do it scant justice by confining our admiration to these merits alone, by taking it merely as the epic of a human author who evolved, out of his poetic brain, a long story or patch of stories. We do it scant justice by comparing it with any epic of modern or ancient times. It is unique in character and design. It is similar to no other work of the world, for it is a virtual History of the Universe dealing with eons upon eons of ages, and tracing the Universe from its creation to the deluge, in all its stages. It passes before our eyes, glimpses of God's work in the

mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms, and the throb and pulsation of the Supreme Being as the father and the soul of the Universe. It opens up a vista, so comprehensive, of unlimited time and boundless space, that the mind reels at the effort to grasp the immensity. The stories appear mythical, judged by the standard of humanity obtaining in the Kali age. But myriads of ages have elapsed since the creator projected the egg of the Universe into space, and Mahabharata is the one great work that claims to depict the mighty march of creation from its nebulous beginnings, onward, ever onward, through myriads of cycles, known as the golden, silver, copper, and the iron ages, with corresponding transformations brought on by shifting preponderances and unequal poisings of Satvic, Rajasic, and Tamasic, attributes of matter. Most readers laugh to read, in this book, of men 21 cubits high, of human bodies composed of light, of men moving about in strange worlds, of birds and beasts speaking a language understood by man, and thousands of other similar things besides, that the narrow vision of the present-day humanity refuses to recognize as within the pale of possibility. But the Mahabharata was written by a seer who saw the infinities of Time and Space like a fruit held in the hollow of his palm, who intimately knew the evolutions and involutions of nature, who could trace the history of human incarnations from deluge to deluge and even before and beyond, who knew how the human atom journeys, impelled by Karma and the Divine will, accomplishes its journey, its inconceivably stupendous journey, by going ownard and returning inward in the path of Pravirtti and that of Nivritti, in lives addicted to the senses and those that discard the senses, in routes losing sight of the Divine light and those where glimpses thereof are

visible, making up an orbit of countless births and deaths, commencing with the Presence of God, going onward to shades and shadows of ever increasing thickness and darkness, until the climax is reached, the summit is attained, when the atom feels repelled by the world of sense-experience, and begins a return journey reversing all the processes so far undergone, and threading a path more and more luminous in an infinite gradation of light, until the goal of Divine light is reached again. Such is the Mahabharata. It has been admired for its size. It has been praised for the tangled web of stories by which it illustrates its morals. It has been applauded for the imaginative glow suffusing its ideas. But it has not been admired enough. These do, by no means, form its chief merits. Sages find this great book a store-house of occult wisdom. They say that the passages of the Mahabharata are capable of ten different interpretations, each elucidating some subtle esoteric underlying thought. Hence, it is deemed a work of higher merit than the Vedas themselves. While at Badari, Sri Madhva conceived the idea of epitomising Mahabharata into a handy volume, so that, the characters and the moral, might impress themselves upon the reader, in their true significance. His wish was to throw light into the hidden corners and recesses of the huge epic, draw prominent attention to the essential and cardinal principles of its teachings, and furnish to the reader a clue for threading the perplexing windings of the great labyrinth.

He consulted Vyasa about his intention, and obtained permission to put his idea into execution. Sri Madhva then condensed the essence of the epic and wrote out the purport in 32 chapters of pithy verse. It is a marvellous compendium that touches every

episode of the original, emphasizes every moral, and explains every mystery, with remarkable accuracy and clearness. "Sriman Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya" as this synopsis is called, enjoys among Mâdhvas, a well-deserved popularity, being regarded as an indispensable text-book to be taken up at the very threshold of their theological studies.

When he descended from the Himalayas, Sri Madhva had thus two precious gifts to offer to Sishyas, viz., his great compendium, and the eight Saligram-stones of especial merit obtained from Vedavyasa.

The former is a favourite volume in every Madhwa library. The latter are now found in worship in four places. One, at Udupi, one at Subramanyam, one at Madhyatala (Sode Mutt) and the remaining five in the Acharya's Mutt. (Uttaradi Mutt).

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CHAPTER XV.

THE RETURN JOURNEY.

Sri Madhva returned to his camp at the foot of the mountain, and joined his followers. He came fresh from the bracing heights of the Himalayas, a veritable picture of robust health and strength. He came after a fill of etherial joy in the presence of Veda Vyasa and in the companionship of the Mahatmas, fresh from the taste of superlative spiritual bliss too subtle for mortal conception, too fine for human language. He joined his ardent followers like life-breath entering an inanimate body. Sri Madhva was in their midst, once more, and this filled the cup of joy, to the brim. He had come back covered with glory, a figure of light rather than of flesh, more Divine than human, more etherial than mortal, with a grace, beauty, and dignity, they had never noticed before. When he joined his Sishyas,, they felt a multiplicity of emotions, happiness leading off and dominating a whole train of other emotions, love, devotion, admiration, gratitude, thankfulness, and so on.

In due course, the travellers left the Himalayan out-skirts and reached the plains. It was evidently desired by the Acharya's followers, on this occasion, that the chief places of historical interest in Northern India, such as, Hastinapura and Kurukshetra, should be visited on the way. Sri Madhva had no objection to it, more especially because he had himseif in a former Avatar, lived there, and performed deeds of valour, as the great Bhima of the Kuru-Pandu war, and vividly recollected the spot and the incidents,

When the party reached the Ganges river, they encountered the same difficulty as before, for want of boats to convey them to the opposite bank. The current was deep and strong, and could not be crossed except by a second miracle. The Acharya's followers had reached the river in advance, and were awaiting his arrival for many hours, till sunset, in helpless despair. Having halted nowhere for rest, puja and breakfast, hunger and fatigue were trying their strength and patience very hard. When Sri Madhva came up, he was informed of the situation that the men and the luggage had been thus stranded, and that no human means was available for crossing the unfordable current. Very probably, he was on Muhammadan soil, and the river was the boundary line dividing a Muhammadan from a Hindu Province. Inter-communication had been forbidden by bans, with the result that the ferry had been absolutely deserted. Thinking over the matter for a moment, Sri Madhva made up his mind, and disappeared suddenly from view. The Sishyas knew not the Guru's intention. They found themselves in an utterly miserable condition, without food, and without shelter, in the closing shades of darkness, exposed to a biting chill. The disappearance of the Guru rendered their forlorn position altogether insupportable.

Having passed out of view, Sri Madhva entered the river, and walked across to the opposite shore, in virtue of occult powers known as Jalasthambha. He passed through water, immersed head to foot therein, without the least contact of moisture. When he emerged on the opposite bank, his body and clothes were dry, as if they had known no water at all. The news spread like wild-fire that a Yogin gifted with extraordinary powers had arrived.

People gathered in thousands to look at the sage who had crossed the Ganges on foot, and had not moistened a cloth withal. They came in groups of tens, fifties and hundreds, and fell at the feet of the Master. To see Sri Madhva was to love him, and adore him, so great was his personal magnetism. To fall at his feet, and crave his benediction, was a spontaneous act which every one felt impelled to by the holiness visible in every feature of the sage. Nobody questioned his antecedents, whence he came and whither he went. None doubted his greatness and his divinity. They flocked to him as if they had known him intimately, and begged to know his wishes. The king himself sent emissaries with orders to render him service. Sri Madhva told them that his party was staying on the opposite shore, unable to cross the water, and that boats should be sent to fetch them. The wish was promptly complied with. Satya Theertha, Upendra, and all, who had been giving themselves up to despair, went into transports of joy and wonder, at the sight of ferry boats plying straight towards them. They crossed in safety, and, to their immense astonishment, found the Master surrounded by thousands of people eager to do him honour. They approached Sri Madhva and gave expression to their devotion and gratefulness, by thanks and prostration.

After a short stay, to give themselves a much-needed rest, the travellers set out from this camp and proceeded to Hastinapur (near Delhi). It was the month of Ashadha when ascetics cease travelling and fix their camp for a period of four months under a vow. Far from the bustle of busy life, lodgings were chosen in a secluded

spot well suited by its situation and surroundings for the meditation of a Yogin. Sri Madhva avoided the river bank, as it was a busy haunt, and preferred seclusion, in order to secure rest and quiet during a prolonged stay of four months. The term was accordingly passed in Tapas (meditation). Those who read events in the subtle astral plane, say that the Goddess Ganga herself appeared in shape and paid respects to the sage, where he was, so that an artesian fountain consecrated by Ganga, bubbled out of the soil near the tree under which the Master usually sat for meditation.

The historic field of Kurukshetra, rendered immortal by Mahabharata is pregnant with memories of the great war between the Pandavâs and the Kuroos. Even an ordinary Hindu traveller passing through the scene, feels a crowding memory of stirring incidents, feels strongly reminded of the heroes who played a prominent part, of Bhishma, Drona, Karna, and others, of pre-eminent glory, of the great Bhima and Arjuna towering head and shoulders above the rest, of Sri Krishna, the God supreme, who chose to play a human part amidst those heroes, for the good of the world. When Sri Madhva and party passed through this Kshetra, he drew the attention of his companions to the chief incidents of the epic, and poined out the immortal places, with something of the pride and animation felt by one who is relating his own personal history. He referred to Bhima's campaign against elephants, and the other feats of valour exhibited in that episode by the Indian Achilles. He showed to the men, the great mace wielded by himself as Bhima, the identical weapon lying hid somewhere in the field, that did such terrible havoc during the eighteen days of the immortal battle. The scene once

bestirred by martial feats unparalleled in the world's history, lay before them, a vast plain of neglected memory, permeated by an impressive stillness and quiet in touching contrast with the past, with nothing more noteworthy than the humbug of a Yogin doing penance there, out of vanity, whom Sri Madhva pointed out as a future Maricha. The Sishyas approached this impostor and learnt by a few questions addressed to him, that he was an unbeliever who hated Vishnu and Vaishnavas with rancour.

No tour through Northern India is complete without a visit to Benares. Sri Madhva visited this famous city, once more. Nobody who laid claim to scholarship could avoid this great centre of oriental learning, which drew savants from all quarters, and patronised scholarship and culture on a large scale. Wherever he went, Sri Madhva lost no time in inviting discussions and propagating scriptural truths as he read them.

At Benares, the Saraswatis, Bharatis, and Puris of the ascetic guild, flocked to him, to engage him in controversies, and break the back of his creed, if possible. One Indrapuri, more dashing than the rest led the opposition and started a vigorous attack. The question turned on the fruits of Karma and Gnana (knowledge), and their efficacy to secure emancipation. How could Karma, it was pointedly asked, pave the way for salvation, if, as we are told by the Shastras, it be a perpetual source of births and rebirths in a never-ending series of progression. It is impossible to quench a fiery flame by means of fuel or clarified butter. It is similarly impossible to quench the passions, by pleasure, to subdue the senses, by addic-

tion to sensuality. It was therefore argued, with a display of considerable erudition, that Sri Madhva's position was untenable, when he said that Karma combined with Gnana would lead to salvation. When the reply came, however, it was crushing. Indrapuri and those who agreed with him were silenced by the telling retort that so far as monists were concerned, Gnana and Karma were alike mythical, and that no plea could be logically made out by them for either. Sri Madhva established his view that good deeds (Sat Karma) purify the mind and prepare the ground for sound knowledge. Acts of merit bring peace and quiet to the soul, so that the devotee concentrates his thoughts on God with far greater ease and emphasis than one who tries to jump at knowledge at a bound. Karma by itself is no road to salvation. It is only a stage of preparation, and as such, it is by no means to be despised. Good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, have their efficacy in qualifying a man to a study of Vedanta; and no text could be cited to controvert this position. Indrapuri was unable to get out of the dilemma in which he found himself fixed, when he had to admit that knowledge, the only instrument of salvation, was itself an illusion and was as unreal as Samsara. Sri Madhva had little difficulty in exposing the hollowness of this monistic cant about an inscrutable Maya.

The stay at Benares seems to have been of some duration. As a great centre of learning and as the holiest place of the Gangetic valley, it had its attractions. As the hotbed of the schools of thought which Sri Madhva sought to destroy, it had special attraction to him, and he naturally prolonged his stay so as to be able to meet as many scholars as possible

to discuss philosophy with them. While camping at Benares, the retinue of the Mutt consisted of more than 50 disciples. It is evident that the sage had grown to attract a large following and was able to maintain a costly establishment.

Sri Madhva once overheard these disciples talking in boastful strain of their own physical strength. They were all able-bodied youths whose exuberant vitality led them to indulge in boast. Sri Madhva sage and philosopher, as he was, was not wanting in humour. He confronted the boasters, and challenged them for a duel either individually or collectively. The startled disciples were encouraged to enter into contest and got badly floored. They tried all their strength, first, one after another, and then, all combined together, but Sri Madhva was more than a match. Among his admirers, there were those who adored the Master for his intellect, wisdom, and spiritual worth. But there were also common men to be taken into account, to whom nothing appealed so forcibly as physical strength. These estimated greatness in terms of muscular vigour, and could be satisfied by nothing short of a Herculean display. Sri Madhva condescended occasionally to satisfy this phase of caprice also, and impressed his men with his greatness.

From Benares, the tourists passed to what is described as the country of Hrishikesa. While here, a striking incident of great popular significance, seems to have happened. It was well-known that the Guru was a staunch Acharya of the Vaishnavite persuasion. The people were not prepared for his being welcomed by Saivites with honour. It happened that the Poojari of the great Saivite temple in this place, an orthodox Brahmin

known by the name of Siva, was prompted by a strange dream to do honour to Sri Madhva. Siva, the deity of his worship had appeared before him and told him to offer Bhiksha to the Guru in a style suited to his exalted position. The Brahmin woke up with a start. There was no mistake about it. He had been bidden by a vivid command, to seek Sri Madhva, and render him divine honour.

In the meantime, God Siva had taken a Brahmin's form and appeared before Sri Madhva himself, the previous day. He had begged of the Master to accept his poor hospitality, and had prevailed on him to agree.

Next day, the townsmen mustered strong, Vaishnavites and Saivites alike, to escort the Acharya to Siva's home in a procession, with insignia of worship, indicative of the great veneration in which he was held by the assembly. A great feast followed. It was sumptuous, by the variety of costly dishes served on the occasion. It was grand for the enormous throng of guests who met to partake of the feast. It was an object-lesson of tolerance for a Saivite to entertain the leader of a rival faith, a lesson that failed not to impress the common people.

From Hrishikesa, the march was into Ishupata Kshetra, the region of Parasurama's arrow, on the west coast of the Indian Peninsula. Sri Madhva visited the temple of Parasurama and paid his respects, as was his invariable practice whenever he touched at a place of Vaishnavite importance.

Here, and at Goa which he passed soon after, Sri Madhva performed gastronomical feats that extorted wonder. One thousand plantains were once

placed before him with a request to do justice to the fruits which were of surpassing quality. Sri Madhva commenced to take them and went on eating until he exhausted the last fruit of the bunches.

At Goa, the quantity was quadrupled. One Sankara offered four thousand fruits. The Master-passed them in with unconcern, together with 30 pots of milk besides. This was a marvel of digestion, and he chose to display his remarkable power, now and again, in order to leave the foot-print of his visit on these places, and make even the common folk remember him. It appears that the visit of Sri Madhva and his doings were reported to the ruler of Goa by some hostile courtier, so as to create a bias against the sage. One day, a party of soldiers suddenly came to Sri Madhva's camp with orders to detain him. The Acharya, however, was more than equal to the occasion. By reason of occult powers, he was in a position to snap his fingers at the militia, defy the king, and thwart their power and their plot. Understanding the situation at a glance, Sri Madhva disappeared from view and none knew whither. The emissaries of the king were simply powerless, and reported their helplessness. The king dropped the matter.

Sri Madhva re-appeared in his camp when the occasion for his disappearance passed away, and continued the tour unmolested. In a certain place, either Goa itself, or a village of the state, Sri Madhva was requested to sing. People had heard of songs animating brutes and beasts and bestirring the vegetable and mineral kingdoms too. They had heard stories like those of the Orpheus' Theatre the music whereof lulled the tiger and the lamb to sit together and

listen, forgetful of hostile instincts. They had heard of Sri Krishna's flute kindling joy in trees, flowers, and fruits. Learning that our Acharya possessed extraordinary powers, they took advantage of the occasion to have their doubts cleared on this subject. They questioned him and were informed that music was indeed capable of all this. But nothing short of demonstration would convince them. They entreated him to sing, if he could, and prove the truth of the stories. Sri Madhva complied. He took up a few seeds in the hollow of his palm and commenced to sing. The melody soon passed the stage to which human ears are accustomed. It grew in subtlety and intensity, until the vibration began to thrill the seeds into unrest. When the spectators examined closely, sprouts had already appeared. The music continued. A tender plant waved its head in visible appreciation of the melody and produced flowers and fruits. To say that the people were staggered by this marvel, falls far short of the reality. They were in ecstasies as the seeds exhibited signs of life in the hollow of a human hand, heedless of all known laws of nature.

From Goa, the party travelled to Udupi without any further incidents of note. Sri Madhva returned to head-quarters, covered with glory and renown. Some of his Pandit disciples sang his fame by versified accounts of the tour. It was from these contemporaneous chronicles in verse, that Pandit Narayana derived information to write 'Sri Madhva Vijia.' So he expressly says in chapters X and XVI of his work.

CHAPTER XVI.

PANDIT TRIVIKRAMA CONVERTED.

Of all the rival systems that Sri Madhva sought to overthrow, it was Advaita that came in for the largest measure of attack. He took up every article of this creed and mercilessly exposed its fallacies. He regarded the claim of identity made by the Advaitin, as subversive of all religion, and as fundamentally inconsistent with notions of worship and devotion. He regarded it as his special mission to destroy the belief of universal unreality, as such a belief was, in his opinion, worse than atheism, materialism, and agnosticism, of every shade. From his favourite spot in the temple of Ananteswara at Udupi, he discoursed, day after day, on this theme, bringing all his powers to bear on the subject. He composed a number of short (monograms) treatises, in the form of essays, dealing separately and exhaustively with some fundamental notion of monism, some favourite syllogism of theirs, some misinterpreted text, and subjecting it to analysis in the light of incandescent logic. If Advaitins love anything at all, they love mysticism. It forms the warp and woof of their system; they live and thrive upon subtleties and incomprehensibles, making even a boast of the circumstance, that, Avidya, the parent of creation, is a veritable mystery of mysteries. Sri Madhva hated this mysticism behind which ignorance entrenched itself. He warred against the philosophy which, claiming to be theistic, attributed Avidya (ignorance) to God and refused to explain why God came to be thus infested. He was a positivist out and out, who did not hesitate to carry logic to its utmost conclusions, and who framed a system based

on ancient scriptures interpreted by close reasoning. It cannot be said that Sri Madhva sowed the seeds of reformation on barren soil. His followers multiplied rapidly. His earnestness was telling, his eloquence was powerful, and his argument was convincing. The old moorings of thought visibly shifted their positions. Men were astir everywhere, to think and enquire, instead of simply taking things for granted. Throngs of people flowed into Sri Madhva's Mutt, eager to question him, and stayed to listen and to admire.

At this juncture, the priestly head of the Sringeri Mutt was one Padma Theertha, evidently the successor of Vidya Sankara, on the pontifical throne. No doubt, the geneological list maintained in the Sringeri Mutt makes no mention of this Padma Theertha. Mr. C. N. Krishnaswamy Iyer regards it as very probable, that, between Vidya Sankara and Vidyaranya, there was an intermediate holder of the high office, and that incumbent must have been known as Padma Theertha. The geneology preserved in the Mutt puts down Vidyaranya as the immediate successor of Vidya Sankara to whom a period of 105 years is allotted as the duration of his pontifical reign. Mr. Sooryanarayana Rao, the author of Vijianagar-history, accepts this list as full and exhaustive. The list gives a rule of 800 years to one Sureswaracharya, the successor of Sankaracharya, and Mr. Sooryanarayana Rao accepts this too, and seriously supports it. It is evident however, that the record has some omissions. Madhva-Vijia refers to Vidya Sankara as the departed "*gnani sresta*", and to Padma Theertha, as being his pupil who inherited the priestly throne. There is little reason to doubt the authenticity of this allusion.

The success of Sri Madhva was the topic of constant discussion in the Sringeri Mutt. The news of every conversion or secession was reported to Padma Theertha, with a view to rouse him to action. They failed not to emphasize the danger of allowing a rival system to be disseminated broadcast among the faithful. Padma Theertha became convinced that the situation was so serious as to call for immediate attention.

A large congregation of the admirers and followers of the Sringeri monastery met to discuss the position. One of the assembly delivered a pungent speech, in the course of which, he remarked that it was the prime duty of their guru, Padma Theertha, to start the crusade at once, and deal a vigorous blow. Vidya Sankara who had met Sri Madhva in Travancore and Ramesvaram, had gone to heaven, they said, bequeathing his learning and position to Padma Theertha. It was, therefore, a solemn trust to take effective steps without delay, for arresting the progress of the new movement. He pointed out with a touch of triumphant pride in his voice, how Advaita had defeated Bhâtta, Prabhakara, and Boudha schools, in days gone by, and how, if wielded by able hands, it was still capable of achieving laurels against the rising "tatwawadi" leader. It was conceded that Sri Madhva was a remarkable person who seemed to destroy whole volumes of Advaita, by monosyllables. Those who heard him and those who saw him, were powerless to resist the influence of his personality. They were carried away by the eloquence and music of his voice. They were mesmerised by the striking handsomeness of his face and features, by the dignity enthroned on his brow, and by the grace that characterised every

movement of his. But he was only a man and he must be humbled, said he.

In this manner, one speaker after another, dilated upon Sri Madhva's success, and worked upon the passions of their guru. They used all their skill to bestir bad blood, not forgetting the weapons of sneer and sarcasm for the sake of effect. They taunted Padma Theertha, saying that even butter melted only after coming in contact with fire, but that their guru was worse than butter, because he was melting away out of cowardice, at the mere mention of the rival's name, without more.

Mr. C. N. Krishnaswamy Iyer calls this a " Pandemonium " in which the enemies of Sri Madhva hatched a wicked plot to harass him. Every one came forward with some proposal or other to do harm. Some of them who professed to be masters of black magic, promised to place their skill at the disposal of the cause. Having arrived at a resolution to stem the tide by any means, fair or foul, the assembly dispersed to carry out their purpose. They worked upon a settled plan of operations, and inaugurated a bitter persecution. If, at this juncture, the government of the day had only lent its weight, the persecution would, in all human probability, have crushed the new faith out of existence. But thanks to the prevailing political conditions of the day, the ruler of no province or state, paid much heed to Advaita or its claims to sympathy and support. So the campaign of persecution was fought somewhat on a footing of equality, though, no doubt, the champions of the old order had a decided advantage in point of numbers, by being defenders of vested interests.

The *modus-operandi* consisted, first-of all, in proclaiming and preaching at every street-corner that "Madhvaism" was an innovation not supported by the Shastras, and that it was therefore gross heresy on the part of Brahmins to give up their ancient Srutis and Smritis and get degraded in the eyes of gods and men. The preachers deliberately suppressed the circumstance that Sri Madhva advocated the highest reverence to Srutis and Smritis, and claimed only a right to interpret them in the light of authoritative canons of comment.

Secondly, every Brahmin who showed a leaning towards the reform, was ostracised as an outcaste, and subjected to social penalties such as very few men would dare to defy. This is still the strongest weapon in India to keep the castes and creeds together. It has always done duty at the bidding of priests, sometimes to check and prevent revolutions and anarchies, and at others, to stifle freedom of thought and conscience.

Thirdly, preparations were made to meet Sri Madhva in a *viva voce* controversy at his headquarters. One Pundarikapuri, an ascetic of erudition, was prevailed on to accompany Padma Theertha in this expedition to try conclusions with Sri Madhva. Evidently, Padma Theertha was diffident about his own powers. Probably, he was an ascetic of poor learning, whose chief claims to homage lay in his robe and sceptre.

To provide for the worst, it was resolved, if all these measures proved ineffectual, to resort to violent steps. Sri Madhva's library was a valuable collection of ancient works, besides his own

writings. Efforts were to be directed to make away with this collection. These works of Sri Madhva were the greatest source of danger. It was from them that-new fangled ideas radiated far and wide. To put out the light, there could be no device better than to pilfer the books and cast them into the sea. The gordian knot would be cut, and the problem effectively solved, they wisely concluded.

The campaign of harassment was thus begun on an organized scale. Leaving the minor measures to the common people, Padma Theertha and Pundarikapuri set out for Udupi to seek a polemical contest. On arrival, they soon sent out a challenge. Sri Madhva never declined or avoided such a meeting. On the other hand, he cordially welcomed every opportunity of publicly discussing his views with learned debaters. The *melee* came off in the presence of a large assembly with umpires duly chosen.

Pundarikapuri was evidently a clever man, but his knowledge was nothing to Sri Madhva's. The Rig Vedas formed the chief topic of debate. Pundarikapuri cut a sorry figure by being unable to expound even the opening lines of the first hymn, so confused was he at the sight of the assembly.

Notwithstanding every effort to rally on the part of Pundarika and his adherents, the affair proved a walk-over to his opponent. Smarting keenly under this crushing defeat, Padma Theertha and party beat a precipitate retreat.

That night, they vanished suddenly, and without notice, nobody could say whither. It was soon discovered that the library of the Acharya had gone too. A base theft had been committed. The librarian,

one Sankarachariyar by name, reported the news to Sri Madhva in blank dismay. Mischief had thus taken a serious turn, at last.

Sri Madhva started without delay in pursuit of Padma Theertha's camp. The latter had however made a great distance by rapid marches. By dint of strenuous exertion, the pursuers were able to catch the flying camp, after a hot chase of many miles, at Pragrya Vata, a village in the modern Puthur Taluq (Kodee Padi in the vernacular).

By this time, Padma Theertha had come to repent, evidently. He was not unwilling to hush up the ugly episode by a compromise and surrender. He was anxious to avoid a scandal.

Sri Madhva gave no encouragement to these overtures of compromise. He was confident that the books would come anyhow, and felt no particular hurry to please his enemies. He had no reason to keep this incident from royal ears, and had no ground to respect the tender susceptibilities of people who had behaved like felons. It was now the month of Ashada, when ascetics have to fix their camp somewhere, and cease touring for a period of four months. Sri Madhva took quarters in the lodgings (Kalu) that Padma Theertha had recently vacated on the failure of negotiations, and spent the term quietly according to the rules of the order.

Information was taken to the Raja of Kumbla, one Jaya Simha by name. An inquiry followed, and this furnished an occasion for the king being thrown into contact with Sri Madhva, and obtain a glimpse of His Holiness at close quarters. Jaya Simha was greatly struck by the history of the Acharya. He came to feel a true regard for the Master who was

leading a life of perfect piety and purity, and was inaugurating a Reformation in spite of odds opposing his way. He heard all about the new system and its tenets, and felt convinced that here was true Vaishnavaism indeed. A royal messenger was sent to the Acharya's camp to pay the respects of the king, and invite Sri Madhva to the king's dominions. The messenger submitted to His Holiness that Padma Theertha had given up the books overnight (it was a full moon day) and that a mediator was in charge of them, and that Sri Madhva might go over and take possession, on receipt of the message.

Sri Madhva travelled westward and went to Kabenadu, the State of the Kumbla ruler. Five miles from Kumbla is the village of Madhur. He encamped at the Madana Dhipa temple of this village. From this place, he proceeded to Vishnumangalam on foot.

We are told that the procession from Madanadipa's temple to Vishnumangalam was one of surpassing grandeur. The bell of the temple was, rung, and the party started on a grand procession. A large concourse of people had gathered to take Sri Madhva with insignia of honour The musicians marched in advance, playing their best airs. Sankeertan groups sang of Hari in ecstatic devotion, and marched in the procession, heedless of nothing but their own all-absorbing song and dance. Brother ascetics and Sishyas walked along, chanting Vedic Hymns in a slow, majestic, soul-stirring monotone. His Holiness walked in the centre, the observed of all observers. His face was beaming with smile, and his features were sparkling with light. Sri Madhva now exhibited an indescribable halo of sanctity superadded to the extraordinary loveliness belonging

to his handsome form. The garland of green Tulasi reached his knees. An umbrella of pearly-white, was held over his head. An eager throng walked on every side with eyes fixed on him, eager to anticipate his slightest wish. After the procession had gone some distance, the party met the king advancing to welcome His Holiness. At sight of the cortege, the king descended promptly from his vehicle (evidently a palanquin) and walked to Sri Madhva. King as he was, he fell prostrate before the holy ascetic, in the dust of the road, and rendered becoming obeisance. It was the spectacle of a crowned king doing homage to an uncrowned king, of royal sceptre acknowledging the superiority of the priestly wand, of a ruler of men bowing before a ruler of hearts.

After a brief exchange of amenities suitable to the occasion, the march was resumed, the king accompanying His Holiness on foot, until they reached the great temple of Vishnumangalam, which was not far off. Here, the inhabitants of about 25 villages had assembled together, to welcome Sri Madhva. Every one felt a peculiar enthusiasm when he joined the throng of Bhajana and Sankeertan parties, and posted himself somewhere on the path to obtain a glimpse of the Master. Everybody felt himself amply rewarded, when he at last caught a glance of the Acharya whose beaming face had a kind look and courteous bow for all.

The crowd made way for the Master and the king to enter the temple. In the biggest hall (mantapam) the assembled multitude settled down eager to see and longing to listen. Sri Madhva sat on a slightly raised seat, facing the assembly of numerous Pandits surrounding him. One of the disciples, Hrishikesa

Theertha, read verses from Srimad Bhagavata and these were expounded by Sri Madhva. It was a charming scene altogether.

There sat in this congregation, a Pandit, Trivikramacharya by name, whose erudition surpassed that of all the other Pandits. He was a noteworthy personage whose scholarship had been the subject of universal praise. He had heard of Sri Madhva and had come to test his worth.

The personal history of Pandit Trivikrama may be told in a few words. He was the son of Pandit Subramanya of Likucha lineage and Angeersa Gotra. He lived in the neighbourhood of Vishnumangalam in a house known as "Kavumutt" a few miles from Kasargod.

Son Trivikrama was a born genius who is said to have lisped in numbers, for, the numbers came. A careful course of education brought out all the latent powers of the prodigy, so that, when he took to the study of Vedanta, he was already an author of renown, having composed a very fine poem "Ushaharana", and was a remarkable grammarian and a respected logician. He studied the huge literature of Sankara's Advaita (commonly spoken of as one and a quarter lacs of granthas—a grantha being thirtytwo words) so thoroughly that he knew it all by heart.

Pandit Subramanya had however a latent doubt that salvation was hard to attain by Advaitic methods. This doubt was one of the legacies he transmitted to his son while imparting the secrets of Vedanta. But it remained buried very deep in the heart. To all appearance, Pandit Trivikrama was a famous exponent of Sankara's school, whose profound learning put everybody to shame. By his side, even Bhanu the

great Prabhakara, was deemed but a pigmy in knowledge.

Armed at every point to meet any attack, this Pandit came to Vishnumangalam and joined the assembled galaxy of Pandits as a star of the first magnitude. He sat silently listening, when Sri Madhva continued to expound Sri Mad Bhagavata. It made an impression on him, stirred up his deeply buried doubts, and created a simultaneous chaos in his mind. He had listened to nothing like this before. He had no fault to find, with all his skill in hair-splitting dialectical subtleties, and with all his ability to make Sanskrit language obey his wish and will, like a slave, and convey any meaning suited to his purpose.

The time and the occasion were not suitable for making himself known. He therefore waited for a better opportunity to engage Sri Madhva in an intellectual contest. He was greatly impressed by what he had seen and heard. He realised, dimly and vaguely as yet, that the ascetic before him was a personage of no mean order.

King Jaya Simha stayed in the mutt, and saw, what is seldom given to royal eyes to see, the inner life of the Master, the springs and motives of his mighty work, the secret of his vast influence, and the growing popularity of his creed. He had for a time thrown off the distance of royalty and mingled with common-folk, and this had qualified him to receive Sri Madhva's blessings.

From morning to evening and later on till late in the starry night, the routine of the Acharya consisted of ablutions, prayers, worship, and teaching. It was a life dedicated absolutely to God's service,

Bathing with the rise of the sun, Sri Madhva spent hours in solitary concentration. Disciples of various grades then approached him in large numbers, and obtained instruction in Vedanta till noon. He then took a second bath at midday, and dressed himself in dry robes, scrupulously secured from impure touch. The Saligrams and images sanctified by the God's invoked presence, were arrayed on daises, with great reverence, and an elaborate service was gone through, in which all felt that they were face to face with God himself and his angels and Bhaktas, and not before images and stones. A chorus of pious disciples chanted Vedic Hymns. Half a dozen Sishyas recited choice selections from the scriptures in praise of the Lord. Attendants moved about with great alacrity to supply the necessaries. Sri Madhva was the central figure of the functions. God was present before their eyes, mental and physical, and in this conviction, every act denoting homage and worship was performed with an intensity of earnestness and sincerity seldom exhibited even towards living emperors. The atmosphere vibrated with emotion. It was charged with piety of the highest order. All eyes were centred on the flowery thrones containing the Lord, and on Sri Madhva going through the service. A spirit of profound godliness pervaded the air, and this sustained the people in defying the cravings of hunger and thirst.

The service usually lasted till 2 or 3 P.M. The repast prepared, usually on a large scale, and intended for anybody who might choose to partake of it, was offered to the Lord and then withdrawn into the kitchen. Thousands of people then approached Sri Madhva to receive holy water and Tulasi leaves. Three spoons were poured one after another,

in the palm, by the Guru's own hand, and were swallowed by the recipient at once, together with a few leaves of Tulasi that had been in contact with the Lord in the course of the worship and were now set apart for distribution. No body that had come to the Mutt, to see, and to take part in the public worship, would dream of departing without receiving Theertha and Prasad. The practice originated by the founder is kept up to the present day in all the Mutts. The eagerness of the rushing multitude to obtain the holy water and the leaves, and then partake of the meal offered soon after, however rough and poor it might be, bears eloquent testimony to the living reality of the faith that dominates the Mâdhva community to this day.

The sceptic may laugh at this, as an aggravated item of credulity and superstition. But the belief is not confined to Màdhvas alone, that shrines, holy water, holy flowers, and divine Prasad, transmit spiritual efficacy. Lord Gouranga *alias* Krishna Chaitanya, of Bengal, whose life may be read in a hundred books, transmitted Hari Bhakti to thousands of people by mere touch. Gouranga lived in the sixteenth century and his life is no fiction. His work has been immortalised by hundreds of Bengali and Sanskrit Biographies that minutely set forth his words and deeds. Gouranga treated Bhakti as a kind of electricity or magnetism, and himself as an inexhaustible store-house thereof. As he walked about, he chose any subject he pleased, a barber, or a washerman, a Mahomadan or an atheist, and simply touched him. The physical contact was enough to convey the emotion. The man thus charged danced with devotion, and became in his turn a source of propagation himself, able by mere touch, to induce a similar

emotion in anybody he chose, or happened, to touch. Krishna Chaitanya never preached a word. He apparently wrote no work on philosophy or religion. Yet, his is the most living faith in Bengal, a true Vaishnavaism of lofty love. It is said that he converted thousands of people by this method of communicating spiritual efficacy through a physical medium, be it Tulasi, Theertha, or Prasad, or something else that he chose to touch and inspire. The reader is referred to Sishir Kumar Ghose's excellent "Life of Lord Gouranga" a book which amply repays perusal. The most important point to be remembered is, that the fountain-head should be a well-stocked reservoir of true sanctity and spiritual force. Otherwise, mere water and leaves will convey nothing obviously. Sri Madhva was such a fountain-source of merit, and he was therefore eminently capable of sanctifying all that came in contact with him.

While at Vishnumangalam, Sri Madhva recovered his library from the hands of mediators, and restored it to the possession of his librarian, Sankarachar. King Jaya Simha was instrumental in bringing about this result without further trouble. His Holiness blessed the king for his kindness and help, and gave him leave to depart. He left the mutt an altered man.

Sri Madhva made a stay of some length at Vishnumangalam, which was evidently a favourite centre of camping for him, and proceeded to the village of Amaralaya (Kudilu in vernacular). Here, he camped in an important temple, and spent most of his time in explaining his Sootra Bhashya to learned audiences. Pandit Trivikrama who was waiting for a suitable opportunity presented himself in the mutt, at this place, and challenged a discussion. What

followed was an epoch-making controversy that lasted for fifteen days with unabated vigour, and ended in the surrender and conversion of Trivikrama.

A full account is given by the Pandit's son himself, whose well-known Madhva Vijia is the most popular treatise on Sri Madhva's life.

We learn that the disputation covered the whole range of philosophical systems, current as well as obsolete, modern as well as ancient. Sri Madhva attacked and vanquished every shade and variety of atheism first, and then refuted those theistic systems also which nominally conceded a God but vested no God-head in Him. Monism came in for the largest share of criticism, and yielded at last, in spite of the vigorous defence set up by the Pandit.

It will be tedious in this connection to descend into fuller particulars of this debate and try to set forth the arguments used pro and con. For the position finally established, the reader is referred to Part II of this book, were an attempt his made to point out the chief tenets of the Madhva philosophy.

The result of this dialectical triumph was, that the defeated Pandit gave up his old faith and begged for admission into the new. He prayed to be accepted as a pupil and initiated into the truths of Dwaita Vedanta. Here was an honest debatant who fought a pitched battle, and lost it. He made a brave defence on behalf of Monism and vested interests, and when he was convinced that his position was untenable, he harboured no ill-will whatever at the defeat he sustained. He had the strength of mind, and the courage of conviction, to lay aside all conceit of scholarship and become a convert. With most people,

an academical defeat carries conviction no deeper than the lip. With Trivikramacharya, it sank deep in his heart. It may be mentioned, that this Pandit's brother Sankaracharya by name, was already a disciple of Sri Madhva. He was the Master's librarian, and it was from his custody, that the books had been stolen. Pandit Trivikrama now followed the example of his younger brother.

The conversion of Pandit Trivikramacharya was an event of great importance. It turned the tide of affairs to an extent that no similar event had done before. The example of a Pandit of the highest calibre giving up the faith in which he was born and brought up, produced far-reaching results. It caused a flutter everywhere. Those who were hitherto sneering and laughing, ceased to sneer and laugh, and felt puzzled by the doubt whether Sri Madhva might not be right after all. Those who were already wavering, hesitated no longer to cross the Rubicon. Hereafter, it was not an isolated band of men, or mere scattered units, few and far between, that rallied round the banner of Dwaita Vedanta. The recruits flowed in, every day, seeking admission into the corps of the devoted, and offering to fight the battle of the Faithful.

They flocked everyday to the Mutt, and sought initiation. Whenever Sri Madhva was satisfied that the seeker was sincere, he allowed the conversion, and signalized it by a moderate brand of heated seals. In this manner, hundreds of men and women received at Sri Madhva's hands heated imprints of metallic moulds representing Sri Narayana's Chakram and Sankha on several parts of their body. The persons thus admitted were, from this time forward, a new order of men. They

felt themselves knit to Sri Madhva and to one another, by a bond of spiritual . brother-hood stronger than any ties of kith and kin. They sallied forth into the world full of the new spirit, and eager to spread the faith. They wore the distinctive badges of the new order, consisting of *namams* (tracings) in semi-liquid gopichandan (white kadlin, a kind of earth) on the fore-head, and the temples, at the root of both arms, on the abdomen, both sides of the chest, on the four sides of the neck, at the back, and at the root of the spine, together with superficial imprints of Chakra, Sankha, Gada, and Padma, produced by metallic mudras (seals) dipped in the gopichandan paste. It was no longer a rare sight to meet such persons, for, their number was fast increasing. They were known as true "Sad Vaishnvas" and "Tatwavadies" (truth-speakers) whose rigid theism and high morals extorted admiration. Pandit Trivikramacharya gave an additional impetus to the religious brother-hood. His scholarship commanded respect, and his devotion to the cause was unbounded. Sri Madhva assigned him the duty and the privilege of writing a commentary of his Sootra Bhashya, for, it was found that the language of the Bhashya was so brief and so condensed as to tax the Pandits and the people hard. The Pandit cheerfully undertook the task and soon produced the famous work, Tatwa Pradeepika by name, which is still an authoritative exposition on the subject, though, no doubt, eclipsed by the more luminous Tatwa Prakasika of Jaya Theerthacharya, who came to the Pontiflcal seat fifty years later.

In the course of his work, Pandit Trivikrama encountered difficulties which severely tried his powers. The enigmatic Sootras and the condensed Bhashya

required a fuller elucidation at the hands of the Master himself. From first to last, the aphorisms created doubts and difficulties, such as could not be dealt with in the Bhashya whose scope was limited and circumscribed.

The Pandit submitted to Sri Madhva that another commentary from his masterly pen was absolutely necessary, in which, the chief topics should be discussed more fully and freely, so as to enable the Sishyas to fathom the depths of Dwaita Vedanta to some extent. The Pandit pointed out, as he alone was competent to do, with special reference to the works already composed by Sri Madhva, that though the field traversed had been large and varied, further light was sorely needed to illumine the path.

The works already written by Sri Madhva were :—

1. Geeta Bhashya.
2. Sootra Bhashya and Anu Bhashya.
3. Commentaries on the 10 Upanishads.
4. Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya.
5. Bhagavata Tatparya Nirnaya.
6. The Ten prakaranas, including Tatwa Nirnaya, Yamaka Bharata, Sadachara Smriti, and Jayanti Kalpa etc., etc.

The result of the Pandit's request, supported as it was by the prayer of other Sishyas too, was the production of 'Anu Vyakhyana' in simple verse. The thoughts were so much at his command, that Sri Madhva dictated the verses with ease to four sishya-amanuenses, and completed the (four) divisions (Adhyayas) of the book, at the same time.

Though the execution of this great work was very quick, it was the master-piece of the author. To render justice to its hidden depths, the reader must resort to the well-known commentary of Jaya Theerthacharya named 'Nyaya Sudha'. A more masterly commentary is unknown in the whole range of Sanskrit literature. It is an immortal work worthy of the great author, and worthy too of the great Master (Sri Madhva) whose hidden thoughts it has sought to unearth for the benefit of the Sishya world. One does not know what to admire most in this book, so remarkably perfect is it in every way, that it is without a peer of its kind. No Mâdhva lays claim to be a Pandit without a mastery of Nyaya Sudha, and he who has drunk of this delicious fountain of knowledge, needs little else to finish his education. From the admirable way in which the author of this great commentary cast the search-lights of truth and knowledge into every nook and corner of doubt, errors, and ignorance, and dispelled the same, Jaya Theertha rendered to Sri Madhva a service whose value it is impossible to overrate. Tradition says that Jaya Theertha lived as a bullock in the time of Sri Madhva himself, and was always employed to carry the load of the Master's sacred books, in his tours. It is stated that this bullock used to be present, reposing at ease, and chewing the cud, during the time when Sri Madhva was engaged in teaching his pupils. The bullock listened with attention, and Sri Madhva knew that it imbibed the lessons more vividly than many of his human *sishyas*. It is added that the duller lot among these even grew jealous at the circumstance, that Sri Madhva seemed to address the bullock more intently than he addressed the pupils. When somebody

once questioned His Holiness, as to who was going to write the commentaries of his works, it is said that he replied, promptly, that the bullock would. This irritated some of the *sishyas* so much so that they hurled a curse at the beast, saying, it should suffer death bitten by a serpent. His Holiness when he heard of it, gave the language of the curse a slight turn, with the result, that the bullock was bitten by a serpent, and the latter died at once in consequence. The poison did no harm to the beast, by virtue of Sri Madhva's "Dwadasa Strotram" which the Master caused the bullock itself to recite.

The idea underlying is that the commentator must have derived inspiration directly from the Master himself, in a personal communion, and that, otherwise, it is impossible to understand the perfection with which the commentaries of Jayatheertha elucidate even the obscurest passages of the Master.

CHAPTER XVII.

VISHNU THEERTHA AND OTHER SISHYAS.

Old Madhyageha Bhattacharya, the father of Sri Madhva, was a blessed man in every way. He lived in the village of Pajaka to a ripe old age. Sri Madhva's younger brother who lived with his parents was an ideal son who nursed them with the tenderest regard. The evening of life was, in this instance, marked by a serenity of peace, which few old people are fortunate enough to lay by and enjoy. Madhyageha recalled to mind the chequered events of his early life, the sorrows he had had, the grief of early bereavements in the death of sons, his prolonged penances and prayers for male issue, the divine grace in conferring Sri Madhva on him, the ecstasies of delight he had felt when Sri Madhva exhibited his *leelas* as a boy in his humble home, and the excruciating agonies he suffered when the parting came. All this he recollected, and more. His heart was filled with thankfulness that God had willed it all for the best. His strength was giving way to the slow ravages of time. The infirmities of age made him feel that life was ebbing away. He did not chafe at this, nor wished for a renewed lease of life and vigour. He had seen enough, suffered and enjoyed quite enough. His favourite studies, Sri Mad Bhagavata and Mahabharata had taught him a philosophical equanimity that fortified his mind to look death boldly in the face. His work was done and he was prepared to depart. He was a type of the holy Hindu who makes the journey of life in the path laid down by Dharma, without turning to the right or to the left, and reaches the

goal with nothing but happy memories and joyful hopes. At last, he took leave of the world, reposing trust in Narayana, and thinking of His Lotus Feet to save him.

Sri Madhva's mother did not survive this bereavement long. The death of a husband is a serious calamity to any Hindu lady, and more especially to ladies of an extremely orthodox type. Thus, it came to pass, that the old mother followed Madhyageha's footsteps, and kicked off the mortal coil soon after. The filial duties enjoined by the Hindu law are somewhat taxing, those to be performed after the death of parents being perhaps more onerous than those during their life. Sri Madhva had nothing to do with the obsequies, having renounced all worldly ties and bonds, at the Renunciation. The law deems an ascetic civilly dead, and excuses him from all duties incidental to sonship, though, no doubt, it relentlessly imposes on him, others of a very exacting nature, in their place, belonging to the last Asrama of the Hindu ecclesiastical scheme. Hence, the younger son performed the obsequies with a due sense of duty. It evidently taxed his resources hard.

The reader may remember that Madhyagehacharya was not overflowing in wealth. He had some lands, the extent of which it is not possible to guess, and some property besides, not worth mentioning. He was able just to make both ends meet, by a life of thrift. Simple living and high thinking is the rule of a Brahmin's life, though, in modern times, western civilisation is playing duck and drake with this rule. Madhyageha had cared little for personal comforts. His younger son had followed his example. He

had made an excellent use, in youth, of the opportunities he had, for acquiring a sound education. He had learnt under his father, and presumably under other teachers too, all that there was to learn in secular and sacred books. This education, it must be confessed, was ill calculated to bring him wealth or add to his worldly goods. On the other hand, it turned his eyes heavenward. He had remained an honest son attending on his aged parents with devotion, and cultivating habits of study and concentration in the moments of leisure that he could snatch. He had been virtually a recluse though ostensibly in society, and had been simply biding his time to be released from the ties that held him to home.

In this frame of mind, he had paid little attention to business affairs, had collected rents very indifferently, and had occasionally run into debts. Ill-luck, failure of the season, and the usury of the money-lender, had pulled him low, and confirmed him strongly in his resolve to break through the worldly bonds, and dedicate his life to the service of God, like his venerated brother. He had been biding his time, and it came at last.

After discharging the solemn trust, he went to Sri Madhva's camp in the kingdom of Jaya Simha, and conveyed the news of the domestic incidents that had given him release. Sri Madhva received the news with emotion, for he had cherished his parents in a corner of the heart, wherever he had been. He had been grateful to his father for his phenomenal fondness, and more so, to his mother, for the ideal virtues that had distinguished her.

Sri Madhva's brother told him all about the last illness of the parents, and everything besides, relating

to his household affairs, and wound up by unburdening his mind of its long-cherished desire. He said that the world had ceased to have any attractions for him, and that he must either become a Sanyasin or die of a broken heart. He begged Sri Madhva to accept him and consecrate him as a monk without delay.

The time was however inauspicious for the purpose. Sri Madhva had no wish to hurry matters. He prevailed on his brother to go back to his home and wait at least till the end of the Châthurmâsyam (4 months') term. When the autumn was passed, and the 'vow period' ended, Sri Madhva set out for Pajakakshetra. King Jaya Simha, in whose dominions he was then staying, was grieved very much at the impending separation, for, he had grown devotedly attached to His Holiness. His importunities to stay, were so pressing, that the Acharya could not lightly set them aside. He managed however, after a time, by tactful explanations, to obtain permission.

Arriving at Pajakakshetra, he caused the rest of the obsequies to be performed by his brother in strict compliance with the Shastras. When the duties to the dead were over, including the anniversaries, there remained no further impediment to the realisation of the brother's eager desire to enter the Holy Order. In begging for Sanyasa, the applicant was found to be thoroughly sincere. He had mastered the Shastras, subdued passions and desires, conquered attachments, and fully equipped himself for Renunciation.

A suitable day was fixed and the ceremony was gone through. Sri Madhva accepted his brother into the ascetic order, initiated him duly and installed him a Sanyasin under the designation of Vishnu

Theertha. The Guru saw with satisfaction, not unmixed with pride, that the recruit gave promise by his learning, habits, and bent of mind, of proving to be one of the holiest of the holy brotherhood.

The ordination of Vishnu Theertha took place near Kanwa Theertha. This holy tank is, it is needless to remind the readers, one mile from Manjeshwar, and about 11 miles from Mangalore to the south. Vishnu Theertha was not the only person who received ordination on this occassion. Seven other persons took orders on this memorable day. They got shaved together, bathed in the Kanwa Theerta, and sat on a platform of the Aswatha tree, to receive the Initiation at the hands of the Master. These spots are still remembered with clearness, and pointed out to pilgrims.

These eight persons were the first ascetics of the eight monasteries of Udupi, whose line has continued to this day. They are the eight monks that took charge of the Shrine of Sri Krishna from the Master. Their names and the Mutts are given hereunder :—

1. Vishnu Theertha, Head of Sode Mutt.
2. Janardana Theertha, Do Krishnapura Mutt.
3. Vamana Theertha, Do Kanoor Mutt.
4. Narasimha Theertha, Do Adhamar Mutt.
5. Upendra Theertha, Do Puttugey Mutt.
6. Rama Theertha, Do Seeroor Mutt.
7. Hrishikesa Theertha, Do Palimar Matt.
8. Akshobhya Theertha, Do Pejawar Mutt.

At this holy spot, there is, even now, a Mutt belonging to Pejawar Swami and also a *Brindavan* of Vijia Dhwajacharya, the Pejawar ascetic who has left a renowned commentary of Sir Mad Bhagavata.

Soon after the ordination, Vishnu Theertha parted from the Master to visit all the sacred rivers and shrines of India. He made a long tour through the length and breadth of the country, bathed in every sacred river, worshipped in every shrine, and returned at the completion of the tour to Harischandra Hill. In the caves and glens of its hilly jungle, he shut himself up, to observe rigid penances for a subjugation of the flesh, and to practise Yoga. He gave up not only luxuries but even necessaries to a very unusual degree. Every fifth day, he took nothing more than Panchagavya to allay the devouring appetite, and this, if some disciple brought and kept it in an urn at the foot of the hills. He pitched his abode at a height, too chill to be endured, in natural crevices too cramped and too risky for human shelter. Thus he passed months and years, furnishing to Sishyas an object-lesson of piety, resignation, and penance, such as they had never seen before.

The world seldom fails to honour merit. Men watched the remarkable hermit with interest and felt irresistably drawn towards him. One man after another, approached him in his solitudes, and begged leave to attend on him. Some entreated him to accept pupils, so that, his vast learning and profound scholarship might not be thrown away. Anirudha Theertha and Badarayana Theertha are two of the disciples who received ordination at his hands. By dint of persuasion and entreaty, Anirudha Theertha prevailed on him to leave the mountain solitudes, and go over to Udupi. He complied with reluctance. His austerity was the subject of admiration everywhere. He should have come to be deified, but for the more illustrious brother who eclipsed him by a piety more divine.

It is easy to guess that the brothers took each his own route, in treading the path to the common goal. The elder had a solemn mission to fulfil. He, therefore, sought people and delivered his message unto all who deserved. The younger avoided society and sought retirement as best suited to his ends. The elder wrote works after works for the benefit of Sishyas. The younger spent most of his time in introspection. Probably, their tastes and temperaments too, led them in different ways, though, of course, both were rigid Vaishnavas, and both were of identical mind in beliefs. Thus it came to pass that Vishnu Theertha felt the bustle of town-life too hot and irksome. He longed for the mountain-wilds, for the solitudes of nature, and wished to roam about as a free hermit. The Western Ghauts, close at hand, which bounded the Canara Country to the east, afforded him facility for gratifying his cravings. He climbed the heights of the Ghauts, and pitched his residence on the peak of Subrahmania. It was a magnificent forest hitherto unexplored by men, and inaccessible to any but the aboriginal tribes of the Hill. Vishnu Theertha found the spot cut out for his taste. It was an ideal spot which answered his heart's longings. He consequently fixed his abode here. Among the sacred places of the west coast that the Mâdhva pilgrim visits, Subrahmania even now ranks high for sanctity. Vishnu Theertha founded a Mutt at the place. The impetus transmitted by his austerities still permeates the institution. It must not be forgotten, however, that Sri Madhva lent the weight of his approbation to his brother's plans. The idea would not have attained fruition without his sympathy and support. It was highly gratifying to him to see his brother, till recently immersed in worldly cares and concerns,

turning out an ornament of a monk. He, therefore, helped him to make the new Mutt a success. Out of the holy 'Saligram-stones he had brought from Vyasa's Badarikasrama, he deposited one at Subrahmania for his brother's worship. In people's eyes, this largely enhanced the importance of Vishnu Theertha's retreat.

Apart from the eight ascetics intended for Sri Krishna's special service, other ascetics were also ordained by the Master. Chief among these, was Padmanabha Theertha. He was Sobhana Bhatta of the Telugu country and was the first convert to the new faith. Padmanabha Theertha perpetuated the line which, later on, branched into Mutts now known as Uttradi Mutt, Vyasaraya Mutt, Sumateendra Mutt, and Mulabagal Mutt. Sri Madhva evidently felt a great regard for this pupil of his, for he chose him for the pontifical seat in succession to himself, an honour that could not have been dreamt of by any one who did not truly deserve the same.

Thus, of the three prominent scholars of the day who entered this fold, Trivikrama Pandit continued a *grahasta* (householder). Vishnu Theertha founded the Sode Mutt and was of the holiest type, and Padmanabha Theertha became the ascetic designate to succeed Sri Madhva himself. Trivikrama Pandit wrote the famous Tatwa Pradeepa, the first known commentary of the Acharya's Bhashya, and Padmanabha Theertha wrote Sanyaya Ratnavali the first known exposition of the Acharya's great work, "Anuvyakhyana". Scores of disciples followed to receive ordination and blessing from His Holiness. Nara Hari Theertha, Madhava Theertha, and Akshhobhya Theertha, are some of the well-known names. These were the successors of Padmanabha Theertha to the Headship of the Mutt,

one after another. Among the grihastha Sishyas, besides Trivikrama Pandit, his younger brother Sankaracharya and another Sankaracharya of the same family are well-known. In this connection, we cannot ignore Pandit Narayanacharya (the son of Trivikrama Pandit) the author of the poem "Madhva Vijaya." This work consisting of sixteen chapters in various metres is a delightful account of the great Acharya's life and doings. This author has been condemned as an inaccurate panegyrist, and what not. But his work has survived all adverse criticism, and enjoys, to this day, a popularity that no other work does in the Madhva community. There is a charming music about its variegated metre, which is quite unique. The manner and the matter of the narrative conveys a peculiar thrill. The grace and the elegance of the style is very telling even to imperfect scholars of Sanskrit. It presents Sri Madhva in his true perspective, as a hero of the highest rank, such as he indeed was. The idea in some quarters seems to be that a biographer should measure great men by tape and rod, take their vertical and horizontal dimensions, and make them out to be small men after all. It is considered a fashion in the name of historical profundity and impartiality, to hold up heroes to contempt and expose their so-called old doctrines to sneer and scorn.

The author of Sri Madhva Vijia was a great admirer and worshipper of the great personage whose life he wrote. He was almost a contemporary of Sri Madhva, and must have been a witness, with his father, of some at least of the chief events set forth in his narrative. Hence he wrote with the fullness of personal knowledge, and with an enthusiasm natural to recent converts.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LAST DAYS.

It has been noticed that Sri Madhva travelled once through Southern India and twice through the North. Besides these travels, the Master performed many a small tour in Canara and Mysore. He honoured the country from Manjeshwar to Subramanya specially, with frequent visits. He knew parts of Mysore at least very well. The banks of the Bhadra near Mysore were his favourite resort for *tapas*.

The sixteenth chapter of Sri MadhvaVijia records a few incidents in connection with a tour in this tract. The master spent some time in Mysore, and passed through Saridantara, Nerenki, Vydianatha, Ujara, and Kadathala, to Kanwa. He halted in every important place and did many a wonder.

On the banks of Gomati, Sri Madhva repeated the wonderful performance he once exhibited at Goa years before. A Sudra King scoffed at the saying that the recital of a particular Vedic Sookta or Sooktas (Hymns) would cause seeds to sprout and grow. He assumed that this was impossible, and therefore attacked the truth and veracity of the whole body of Vedic teachings as a pack of untruths. Socially, he was a great man. He was an anti-Brahmin of a malicious type. His views received a leaden weight from his rank. Sri Madhva who, ordinarily, would have paid little heed to sneering criticism of this sort, thought within himself that the occasion might be availed of to make a demonstration. None but he could do it, and if he chose not to, the thing would remain unproved, for ever. Sri Madhva

accepted the king's challenge, and took up a few seeds in his palm. He recited the hymn in question "बाभ्रोपचरी" slowly, with the rise and fall of Vedic music, and in a manner that no Brahmin had heard it ricited before. The result was indeed as the Sruti declared. The recitation produced the same effect on the seeds as his soul-stirring music had done at Goa. The seeds grew into plants, followed by flowers and fruits. The marvel struck the king mute.

To the last, Sri Madhva's physical and mental power continued unabated. He was frequently furnishing instances of the iron frame he possessed, and of the indomitable strength of his muscle. Once upon a time, two brothers Kodanjadi and another, who evidently had the reputation of extraordinary strength, happened to visit the Mutt. Their boast reached Sri Madhva's ears, and they were consequently called to his presence. Gandavata (Kodanjadi) said that he had once carried a flag-staff of Sreekānta temple, too heavy for 30 men's united strength. He boasted further, that he had, by a kick, felled a living cocoanut tree. Sri Madhva could not repress a smile when the brothers claimed to be matchless in strength. He allowed them a trial. He fixed a toe of his on the floor, and asked them to dislodge it, if they could. Kodanjadi came up and tried all his strength. Sweating hard with fatigue, and trying all his might, over and over again, he gave up the trial as hopeless

On another occasion, and at a different place, another Sandow turned up. His boast was that he could lift and carry weights that fifty men could not. Such a feat he had accomplished, they said, by triumphantly carrying about a ladder too heavy for fifty able-bodied men. Sri Madhva gave him his

neck, and asked him to squeeze it flat if he could. Meantime, he began to recite a Vedic hymn at a high pitch, with suitable intonation of voice. Poorva Vata (this was the Sandow's name) went on pressing as hard as he could, but the recital went on gloriously, all the same; the ringing voice was not affected in the least, not a crack appeared, no hoarseness, no lowering of pitch, nothing at all to indicate that the vocal organ was under pressure. An apology of Bheema was of course no match to a real Bheemasena.

Strong and weighty as he was, Sri Madhva once caused a thin bachelor-boy to lift and carry him on his shoulders round the four streets of a Nrisimha Temple. He sat so light that the boy seemed to carry a feather rather than an Avatar of Bheema.

While on this subject of Sri Madhva's supernatural strength, reference may be made to an inscription recorded in Rice's Mysore Gazateer, which proves what is mentioned in Madhva Vijia, Chapter XVI. verse. 9.

At page four hundred, the gazateer has the following description, "Kalasa is a village in the Bale-Honnur Taluq, situated in thirteen, fourteen' North Latitude, and seventy-five twenty-six E long., near the right bank of the Bhadra, by road, twenty-four miles south-west of the kasba (Mysore.) It is situated in a valley surrounded by the lofty hills of the Western Ghauts range, and, at the southern base of Merti, the grand hill of Kalasa. It contains a large temple dedicated to Kalaseswara, surrounded with inscriptions of the Bhairsa Wodayar family of Karkala. The temple is said to have been founded by Santa Bindu, a king from the north, in order to atone for the sin of slaying animals in the chase. It was therefore probably a

Jain temple originally. Mounds covering ruins on all sides point to the existence of a large town in former times. It was included in the dominion of Huncha and of the Karkala chiefs descended therefrom. Subsequently, it became the residence of the Karkala chiefs. The town then extended so as to include the present villages of Melangadi, Keelangadi and Rudrapada. Going through Melangadi, and keeping on to the river, a sacred bathing place, called 'Ambu Theertha', is reached, where the stream rushes very deep between some water-worn rocks. At one point, is a large boulder, a big square-shaped stone, placed horizontally on another. On the former, is an inscription in Sanskrit, stating that Sri Madhvacharya brought and placed it there with one hand."

This inscription is of Kadur District, Mudgeri No. 89. It runs:—**श्रीमध्वाचार्यैरेकहस्तेन आनीयस्थापितशिला ॥**

This archæological discovery gives food for reflection even to those sceptically disposed, and is hailed with joy by those who believe in Sri Madhva's supernatural powers. From Madhva Vijia, it is gathered that His Holiness came one day to the river bank and found a huge boulder lying there. On questioning the people about its history, he was informed that the stone had been brought by a thousand persons, and deposited there, in order to serve as a bridge over the deep current, and that, owing to its great weight and natural difficulties at the particular spot, the design had been abandoned. Sri Madhva at once lifted the stone with a single hand and placed it where it had been desired and intended it should be. There is no room for doubt, from the extensive ruins in the neighbourhood, that Ambu

Theertha then abutted on a populous town and that it was a bathing ghaut largely resorted to by the townsmen of Kalasa, Melangadi, Keelangadi, and Rudrapada.

Instances of extraordinary eating have been noted in previous chapters. Instances of prolonged fasting were only too common. On some occasions, it is said, when he saw that the repast prepared by a poor host was limited in quantity and hardly sufficient under ordinary circumstances for a large party, he still caused it to be distributed among hundreds of men with the result that everyone of them left with a satisfied appetite.

Sri Madhva took a straight westerly route from Ambu Theertha passing through Subramanya and Madhyatala. On the way he halted in many of the important places. He passed through Saridantara Doab, the belt between Kumara Dhara and Netravati, at a time when the country lay parched up by want of rain and the people were in the throes of a bitter famine. It is said that the advance of His Holiness brought relief to the suffering people. A few good showers fell, which changed the situation visibly.

At Parantee alias Neranki, he found that an ancient temple of renown had been closed owing to the faction of the managers and Poojaries, a state of things only too common now-a-days. He summoned a large gathering of the leading citizens and the temple authorities, and pleaded warmly and zealously to bring about an amicable settlement. In half a day, the differences were made up, and the temple gates opened to the public for worship.

He next visited the temple of Vydianath and offered worship to the deity. In this place, he composed the work known as 'Krishnamrita Maharnava,' codifying in a short compass, the rules regulating the Yakadasi fast, for the benefit of a devoted Sishya. It would appear that Sri Madhva reached Vydianath on a new-moon day, late in the evening. A wicked king had harrassed and forced him to leave his last camp suddenly. By forced marches, the party had pushed on to Vydianath and reached it at a belated hour. Here, a warm reception was accorded to the Guru. The Pooja took place and the Biksha dinner followed. The host and his people could not, however, partake of the *Prasad*, because they had already had their dinner in proper time at noon, and supper was not possible, as it was a new-moon day. Sri Madhva asked them to sit down and take meals in his company, absolving them of any blame attaching to it. This particular family takes a second meal on the new-moon day, even now, in commemoration.

At Ucha Bhooti, alias Ujare, a furious controversy took place over some moot point. A large congregation of Pandits fancied that though Sri Madhva might be a great scholar and authority on the Upanishads, his knowledge was probably poor in the ritualist section. With this idea, they swooped down upon him with minute questions and inquiries. They were however surprised to find that Sri Madhva was quite equal to the occasion. In this connection, he composed the work "Karma Nirnaya" being the exposition of a Vedic Hymn **महानाम्नी ॥**

Sri Madhva lived seventy-nine years and some months, from the Vijia Dasami day, Vilambi, to the

ninth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Magha of the year Pingala. For some months, before he chose to disappear from earthly environments, he evidently stayed on the banks of Kanwa Theertha. It must be during his sojourn in this camp, that Nara Hari Theertha turned up from Orissa with the images of Rama and Sita. For further particulars, the reader is referred to the episode related at some length at the end of chapter XII. On the fifth day, in the bright fortnight of Aswina, in the year Pingala, *i. e.*, three months and sixteen days before Sri Madhva became invisible, Narahari Theertha, one of the earliest disciples of his Holiness, brought and presented the images. If the idols were already sacred, by their antiquity, by their association with Sri Ramachandra himself, and by long ages of worship in the royal chapels of Seetha and Lakshmana and in the Pooja houses of devotees like Hanuman and the Pandavas, they became doubly charged with renewed sanctity by the spiritual greatness of Sri Madhva. Better than silver and gold, better than lands and Jaghirs, better than titles and privileges, the Mutts of the Mâdhva community value the possession of these idols into whose apparently inanimate forms sages without number have from time immemorial breathed invocations and prayers out of surcharged hearts of devotion.

Image-worship is a large question. It has suffered deadly attack from iconoclasts both physical and theoretical from every quarter. The foreign missionary levels all his blows at it in the belief that it is the most vulnerable point of the Hindu system. The University-man suppresses a sneer rising to his lips out of a conflict between patriotism on one hand and intellectual honesty on the other. He

wishes in his heart of hearts that this practice were swept away, and sees, with a sigh, no signs of the consummation.

Of late, however, the other side of the question is receiving some advocacy and support. The condemnation is decreasing in volume and acrimony, thanks mainly to Theosophical Teachings. The image is getting somewhat tolerated as a help to concentration, as a focus of spiritual vibrations or as a remembrancer of high ideas. Baba Bharati puts it strongly when, in referring to America, he says, "They will bow to man, they will idolize man, but not God. Every man here idolizes his lady-love, and every lady idolizes her lover, with more or less abject worship. They will worship the picture of a lover or a lady-love day and night, but they will not worship the image of God, even in a picture. They will pay homage to a moving form of wealth, or of physical beauty, or sensuality, but hate to think, and much less worship, an image of God. They are worse idolators than the Hindoos whom they affect to hate as heathens. They worship idols of money and human flesh; the Hindoos worship idols of God. They worship material forms of mere matter; the Hindoos worship sanctified forms of the Divine Spirit or its attributes. Let them raise their standards of idol-worship first, in order to be worthy to talk of the purely transcendental idolatry of the Hindu".

One who dares not claim a monopoly to wisdom or common sense, may well hesitate to condemn Sri Madhva's efforts to secure these images as mere aberrations of superstition. Nara Hari Theertha waited for Twelve long years or more, during the

disability of an Infant ruler to obtain them as gifts. This herculean endeavour was out of place, if these idolators regarded every block of wood or stone good enough to deify or bow to. With eight Saligrams of Vyasa in his possession, with other images consecrated by himself in his Pooja box, there was no occasion for ecstasies if Sri Madhva did not regard the images of Rama and Sita as objects of pre-eminent spiritual value.

The span of mortal life that Sri Madhva had assigned to his earthly career was run out. The work was done, the aim was achieved, and the goal attained. The seeds of a renovated religion had been planted in fertile soil, among good men and true, and they were bound to sprout and shoot, blossom and fructify, in proper time. He had spoken and written in words winged with fire. He had dispelled doubt and delusion in honest minds, and left the fruit of his labours in the hands of God. He had striven hard with no mean success to stir up reason and reflection among the learned of the day, and expected that posterity would reap a harvest of plentiful bliss, out of his work. It seemed as if Sri Madhva was only waiting for Nara Hari Theertha and the images, before he could lay down his task. When this purpose was fulfilled, nothing remained but to pass the mantle to the shoulders of Padmanabha Theertha and dedicate his own life and work unto Providence.

To a vast gathering of pupils he was warmly expounding his favourite Upanishad, Aitareya, when the curtain fell, with a shower of flowers from the heirarchy of Gods. Sri Madhva disappeared body and soul from vision, and repaired unseen to Badari for good.

PART II.

TEACHINGS OF SRI MADHVA.

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CHAPTER I

SRI MADHVA'S PERSONALITY.

A GENERAL VIEW.

The East is proverbially immobile. It is averse to change. It is slow to receive new ideas. Its conservatism is well known. Those who fully realize the phenomenal disinclination of India to change, may pause for a moment to think what a great person Sri Madhva must have been to have attacked the strong-holds of custom with such a large measure of success.

Man everywhere clings to his faith with great tenacity, and the oriental man in particular sticks like a veritable leech to whatever bears the impress of custom and age on its brow. The history of most nations bears witness to the bloodshed and bonfires of martyrdom at the altar of some formula of religious faith. It therefore means no ordinary strength and power when a Reformer rises among men and succeeds in dislodging a single strong conviction or eradicating a single well-rooted practice. The orthodox call these great ones Incarnations of some superior deity. In the west, they would simply be called Heroes. We need not quarrel over mere difference of nomenclature. It does

not admit of doubt that these leaders of men are superior personalities, great by their moral, intellectual, and spiritual height. They possess some super-subtle sense or faculty, be it intuition or inspiration, which enables them to see through the veils of nature and hold a mirror to the inner workings of hearts and souls.

Ancient books say that in the golden age (Satya Yuga) men were different to what they are, and that the Satwic element of 'illumination' composed and permeated their bodies. We are told that, drifting through millions of years, the Universe has been deteriorating into grosser and grosser conditions, until, in the iron age in which our lots are cast, dense ignorance and discord, is the prevailing note.

When the three attributes of matter, the gunas of Prakriti, begin to vibrate, creation is started. Satwa is a comprehensive term for light, equilibrium, and harmony, in the most comprehensive sense. Rajas is activity, passion, and vibration. Tamas is destruction, density, darkness, inertia. When these gunas lose their balance of equipoise, Pralaya or Universal quiescence is at an end, and the wheel of the cosmos begins to roll, propelled, of course, by the will of the Supreme Being. At the infancy of the world, density and darkness, (the Tamo guna) is naturally so feeble as to be negligible. Hence it follows that an ordinary man of the golden age, will, if born with the same spiritual and mental vigour, be a genius, an avatar, in the silver, copper, or iron ages. There is thus nothing intrinsically outrageous to common-sense in the philosophy of Avatars. Sri Krishna declares that these high in-

carnations are brought about by Him, whenever virtue is badly out of joint.

The question, however is, was Sri Madhva an Avatar? What are his claims to be considered such? Was he one of those rare Beings who hold up the torch of knowledge to light up the heavenward path of straggling humanity? If so, what are the proofs? The sequel must answer.

Sri Madhva was a Teacher of enormous power. He revolutionized religious worship by making it a surrender of the heart and the soul, instead of being a mere realization of the head. He made devotion a thrill, a paradise, on earth. He presented God and man in a new relation altogether, by emphasizing that aspect of the Divinity which blesses and redeems the Bhakta, out of grace. Thousands of people followed Sri Madhva, idolized him and deified him. He accomplished in South India what the prophet of Nadia did two centuries later in Bengal. Sri Madhva and Lord Gouranga were both teachers of Dwaita out-and-out, the points of resemblance being in fact so numerous even as regards details, that Swami Vivekananda is of opinion that the Chaitanya School is no other than the Madhva system in essence. He says speaking of Sri Madhva "There has been the great Southern preacher, Madhva Muni, and following him, our great Chaitanya of Bengal *taking up the philosophy of the Mádhvas and preaching it in Bengal.*" In these circumstances, those that believe in the divinity of Gouranga, and such may be counted a legion, would hardly dispute Sri Madhva's position as a great Avatar.

A divine light, a supernatural halo, covered Sri Madhva's person. Pandit Narayana goes into

raptures in describing this particular feature of the Master. Sri Madhva looked more like a being of light than of flesh. The shiny softness of skin was a striking characteristic. The spritual glow found expression in a physical radiance, and this captivated the on-looker. He was a magnificent figure, says his biographer, indescribably magnificent, in shape, figure, cast, and mould. He truly resembled the eminent sons of Satya Yuga, whose spirituality enabled them to see God face to face and commune with Him almost in the daily intercourse of life. Sri Madhva so lived and behaved that every word he uttered and every act he did, seemed uttered or done in the personal presence of God. Judging from his conduct, deportment, and demeanour, throughout, the conclusion is irresistible that God stood incessantly before his eyes as his inseparable guide, philosopher, and friend. The result was that he spoke, and taught, with tremendous earnestness. He spoke and wrote with a ring of certainty and seriousness not always found in the utterances of other Solomons and prophets of the world.

The orthodox call him an "Yekanta Bhakta," meaning thereby that he was a devotee of the very highest calibre, because he loved the Lord with all his heart, with all his might, and with all his soul, and never wavered in the least. This is his greatest claim for esteem. He himself lays it down as a fundamental doctrine of his system, that no person is great unless he loves God and is beloved by God, that devotion is the only true measure of greatness, and that a person is entitled to public esteem and regard only in direct proportion to the love he feels for God, and no farther or otherwise.

Sri Madhva answered the test laid down by himself to an extent utterly beyond the reach of any Jeevatma even in the hierarchy of angels (Gods). His title to glory was his Bhakti, unalloyed and undiluted by the least trace of worldliness, or by the faintest tinge of considerations related to hope and fear. He loved God for His own sake, and there was nothing more to be said of it.

No doubt, Sri Madhva performed miracles as other prophets did, before his day. It is said that he ate super human dinners and lifted impossible weights. He brushed aside known laws of nature in a manner that no other mortal could have done. He walked through unfordable depths of the Ganges as if on *Terra Firma*, and saved his followers from perilous situations, by nothing short of miraculous deeds. It is needless to recapitulate all that he did. When he sang, the music produced a commotion even in the vegetable kingdom. When he recited a Vedic hymn, seeds held in the hollow of his palms, shot forth sprouts and branches. All this, he did in order to impress the common folk.

Other Prophets did similar things in their days. Sri Sankara, it is said, made his disciple Padmapada walk on the surface of the Ganges as if it were a solid sheet of firm ground. He had, we are told, a personal interview with Vyasa, sustained a hot disputation with him over a vexed question of Brahma Sootras, and Padmapada pacified the disputants by a personal appeal. When Sri Sankara once dropped into Mandana Misra's house and argued with him, the fading garland of Mandana declared his defeat. When Mandana's wife Bhârati took up the gauntlet and put awkward questions to Sri Sankara

in the sciences of Cupid, they say, that the latter made what is known as Parakâya Pravesa by entering the corpse of the Prince Amaruka, and in order to learn the subtleties of sexual science, reigned as a monarch for a time in the assumed body, leaving his own legitimate case inanimate under a tree. The record adds that thus dressed in brief kingship, he enjoyed the queens and mastered the mysteries of love, with the result that Bhârati was ultimately vanquished in debate.

Mr. Sooryanarayan Rao. B. A., author of Vijaynagar History, says that one Sureswaracharya, the immediate successor of Sri Sankara, ruled for eight-hundred years on the Sringeri throne. He brushes as untenable, the usual criticism of common sense, and gravely supports this prolonged rule.

The life of Sri Ramanuja is similary full of miraculous incidents. At every step, Sri Ramanuja is represented as holding long conversations with the Gods of Srirangam and Conjeevaram. We are told that God Ranganath and God Varadaraja gave him frequent interviews, answered his questions, solved his difficulties, gave him advice, and submitted even to his capricious whims and moods. It is recorded, that when this Teacher attended the funeral of Yamunacharya, he found three fingers of the corpse closed within the palm, and that Sri Ramanuja caused them to open by pledging his word to fulfil three of Yamunacharya's cherished wishes. On a certain occasion, twelve thousand Samanas came down to hold a disputation with this Teacher. It was evident that no human voice could possibly cope with the situation. The Teacher, it is said, went behind a screen, assumed the form of Sesha (serpent)

and answered the queries of the twelve thousand questioners by simultaneous replies delivered in such a manner as to make each reply audible only to the particular querist whom it concerned. Sree Vaishnavas believe implicitly in these miracles. Sri Ramanuja visited the court of Delhi and obtained the image of Rama Priya from the palace of the Mahommadan Princess. The royal owner at first refused to part with her favourite image. But Sri Ramanuja earnestly invited the Lord, whereupon the image began to walk towards him with the ringing anklets of bells dancing to his tune.

From Jesus Christ, Budha, and Mahomud, down to the humblest Messiah of every land, instances may be cited by hundreds, to prove a sort of universal belief in miracles. Sceptics and agnostics attribute such phenomena to warped vision in some cases, to imperfect observation or to wilful exaggeration in others. They say, in some extreme cases, that some partisan panegyrist concocted them. I cannot say that the sceptics and agnostics are wholly wrong. It is however too great a strain, to conclude, in all conscience, that the whole record of what seem to be supernatural incidents, is simple myth and hallucination, in the case of all the great men of every land and clime.

Miracles alone never establish a faith. Max Muller observes "Miracles have often been called helps to faith, but they have so often proved stumbling blocks to faith ; nothing has produced so much distress of mind, so much intellectual dishonesty, so much scepticism, so much unbelief, as the miraculous element in the Christian religion."

This observation is true of almost every living religion in the world. To quote the same scholar again, "It is due to the psychological necessities of human nature that so many of the true signs and wonders performed by the founders of religion, have so often been exaggerated, and, in spite of the strongest protests of the founders themselves, degraded into mere jugglery." Neither in the west, nor in the east, are people carried away by mere miracles. In India, miracles are regarded as mere unessential accidents of religious history, which, true or untrue, are no arguments to prove or disprove the truth of any religious doctrines. We credit even heretics with extraordinary powers of magic. We allow it possible for a mere juggler to pass through fire and walk on water, and do likewise many a feat in apparent defiance of nature's laws, but we do not dream of accepting his views on religion. Whether Sri Madhva performed miracles or not, his title to greatness does not lie in them, but in his virtues, his austerities, his learning, his ethical and spiritual leadership.

A modern European critic, by no means a panegyrist or partisan, sums up his opinion about Sri Madhva in the following words.

"His zeal, his rigid self-renunciation, combined with serene gentleness and benignity, his wisdom and eloquence, his personal dignity and beauty, gave strange force to the doctrines he taught, and won men's hearts. Wherever he went, crowds flocked to his teaching, and thousands of all ranks enrolled themselves among his adherents. In the fulness of his fame, he went to Badari. His was a mind, not only deeply reflective, but of great practical sagacity and insight, capable of profound and comprehensive

views of life, able to descern the causes of the evils under which society laboured, and to devise and apply the proper remedies. The impression left on the mind by his whole career is that of a man who combines with intellectual originality, the not less essential elements of greatness, such as magnanimity and moral elevation of nature, superiority to vulgar passions, an absorption of mind with larger objects, such as rendered him absolutely insensible to personal ambition, also self-reliance and strength of will, the confidence that comes from consciousness of power and resource; the quiet, patient, unflinching resolution which wavered not from its purpose in the face of dangers and difficulties that baffle or wear out men of meaner mould. Along with these, he possessed other qualities not always combined with them, such as sweetness, gentleness, quickness, and width of sympathy. His character embraced that rare combination of qualities, which lends to certain exceptional personalities, a strange power over all who came within the range of their influence, calls for the love and devotion of human hearts, welds under a common impulse, the diversified activities of multitudes, and constitutes its possessors, the chosen leaders of mankind. An important place is undoubtedly due to the morality which was not only embodied in the life of Madhva, but constitutes a great part, if not the main subject of, his teachings."

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CHAPTER II.

WHAT WE OWE TO THE FOUNDER.

SOME CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS.

It has been observed that "Sri Madhva originated little but reformed much". This may be true enough. Max Muller says, " Religion, like language, is everywhere an historical growth, and to invent a completely new religion would be as hopeless a task as to invent a completely new language". But Sri Madhva gave point to so many articles of faith, as to individualize his theology into a separate system, into a distinct religion, worthy of the name. The soil and the atmosphere of the country was mature for his message. He availed himself of the general receptivity, and formulated an acceptable interpretation of God and the Universe. To this, he added a code of rules to regulate human conduct in relation to God. Thus, under the touch of his fingers, Brahminism became crystallized into a new gem, composed of tenets, beliefs, practices, and institutions, welded into a homogeneous whole, and reflecting like a new-born crystal, an effulgence peculiarly its own. In this sense, and to this extent, it was a new religion.

The test of a living faith is the degree of influence it exerts on the practical life of its votaries. Its vitality and its vigour do not consist in metaphysical quibbles or logical gymnastics. Max Muller says, " Practical religion is life, is a new life, a life in the sight of God and, springs from what may be truly called a new birth." An intense belief in the

future life is a characteristic feature of Hinduism in general. With Mâdhvas, the invisible is separated from the visible by a very thin veil indeed. It is impossible to light upon another community in the world, whose thoughts, words, and acts, are more intimately influenced by, and bound up with, beliefs in a future state. With a Mâdhva, life consists of one incessant round of duties to God and Devas, and little besides. Sri Madhva wrote out a code of rules (in his work known as Sadâchâra Smriti) in which he fills all the 24 hours of every day and all the 360 days of every year with some observance or other, with some act or omission, intended to advance spirituality.

No ideal, however lofty, fails to suffer by lapse of time. In course of time, it passes through impure minds, and is handled roughly by hostile forces and conflicting currents of thought. A crust of superstition grows over it and hides the light. Sri Madhva's ideals are no exception to the melancholy rule. The lapse of 700 years since he lived and taught, has degraded his ideals in many respects. But even when full allowance is made, it is a matter for congratulation that the living fire of Sri Madhva's burning words is not yet dead, and that examples of self-abnegation at the alter of faith are probably more numerous in the Mâdhva community than anywhere else.

The Ekadasi-fast is an instance in point. Once a fortnight, numerous men, and most women, in this sect, fast for a whole day, not taking even a single morsel of food, or a drop of water, to allay hunger or thirst. Occasionally two such days of fasting occur together, under some rules of planetary calculation

Nothing daunted, they observe the fast rigidly for forty eight hours and more. A long list of other fasting days is similarly in force. It is needless to go into details. It is not a list more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Such is the intensity of belief.

In days of yore, the school of Kumarila Bhatta gave a powerful impetus to animal sacrifices. Sri Sankara gave it a check, but tolerated it. He advocated the view that animal sacrifices were enjoined by the Shastras and were highly meritorious, though (*Gyana*) knowledge alone could save the soul. Instances were not uncommon, in which animal slaughter was carried on with cruelty in sacrificial sheds. Sri Madhva put a stop to this with his powerful voice and pen. He did not do away with the system of sacrifices altogether, but he enjoined a substitute for the living victim, to be made of meal-flour. The spectacle of a Brahmin or Brahmins killing sheep was, in his opinion, growing scandalous. He proved it to be against Shastraic law in the Kali age, and forbade the practice altogether, so as to make the Brahmin's life a consistent vegetarianism throughout.

Brahminism had become an uncertain code of doctrines, regulations, and practices. Special and local customs, Kulâchârâs and Desâchârâs of various kinds, had introduced innovations and changes, so much so, that the Brahmin of the North was hardly identifiable with that of the South, or the West. The ecclesiastical government of the Jagat Guru was not always efficient enough to check deviations and enforce uniformity. The territorial

jurisdiction was vast, and the population to be governed immense. Hence the special and local divergences had come to be innumerable, minute, and subtle. The organisation of the Sringeri Abbot was too feeble to take cognizance of delinquencies then and there. Those that owned allegiance to a central ecclesiastical authority lived scattered from one end of the land to the other, under such divergencies of political and social conditons, that nothing short of a thoroughly organized ecclesiastical bureaucracy could have prevented divisions and subdivisions of sectarian beliefs. Thus it had come to pass that even the disgraceful excesses of men and women addicted to Bachanalian orgies, in the name of Shakti worship, were growing into a popular cult. These votaries professed to worship the feminine principle. To carry on their religious service, they selected a naked woman, somebody on hire, and carried out a programme consisting of disgusting excesses with wine and women.

The advent of Sri Ramanujacharya introduced order into the prevailing chaos. The secession cut off a large slice of the Brahmin community. The men thus separated, came under a closer supervision and discipline. They were animated by the spirit of a new fraternity, and by a sense of compactness, unfelt hithertofore. Sri Madhva brought about a further secession. He revised the laws of Brahminsim so as to obsoletise every doctrine or practice obnoxious to the moral sense. The abolition of animal slaughter and the suppression of Shakti worship in the revolting fashion it prevailed in, are two of the many wholesome reforms for which Sri Madhva deserved thanks and gratitude. The

result could not be otherwise than a great ethical gain to Southern India at least.

A Mâdhva house without a reserved room for Pooja, is as rare as a European house without a drawing room. In adjusting the available accommodation for his needs, the Mâdhva Brahmin bestows attention first and foremost on his Pooja box and the Saligrams and images he has to worship day after day. He sets apart a room as *Sanctum sanctorum*. The lady of the house is the guardian of the room and its contents, in a special sense. She keeps it scrupulously clean and washed, and maintains, if means permits, a perpetual lamp on the *dais* where the box of Saligrams and images remains installed. She rigidly observes and enforces every rule to secure the premises from contamination and impurity of touch. If one thing more than another characterises the members of this sect, it is their elaborate rules and practices to be immune from contamination of touch. No Pooja, or any holy act, or cooking, can be performed by a man or woman except after a bath. Clothes washed and dried so as not to have come in contact with anything impure, should alone be worn on such occasions. Minute are the rules relating to personal purity, dealing elaborately with the dress to be worn, the jars to be touched or avoided, the spots that may be trodden on or may not be, and so on. The women are much more rigid than the men in this matter. The touch of a baby is enough to cause pollution and entail a fresh bath. It may be that these observances, not always insisted on from rational stand-points of personal cleanliness and sanitation, go sometimes to ridiculous lengths. But, on the whole, the system is highly beneficial. First

of all, it ensures to the God's room an absolute immunity from promiscuous entry. It creates for the sacred premises, the reverence and awe so necessary to make up the true spirit of devotion. Secondly, it preserves food from impure touch of every kind. Even from hygienic standpoints, nothing is more important than to secure dishes from promiscuous touch, especially among a people who do not use spoons and forks for eating, but use their fingers freely in handling the food.

It is thus a noteworthy feature of a Mâdhva household that the chapel and the kitchen are both in a state of ideal cleanliness, that the utensils employed in both are, by constant attention and incessant washing and scouring, kept brighter than the soldier's button.

The notions of personal purity are traceable to very rational and sensible ideas of physical laws.

Manu says :—

अद्भिर्गात्राणि शुध्यति मनस्सत्येन शुध्यति ॥
विद्यातपोभ्यां भूतात्मा बुद्धिर्ज्ञानेन शुध्यति ॥

"The body is purified by water, the mind by truth, the soul by knowledge and austerity, and reason by wisdom." Water is thus classed as a great physical purifier, and so it is, undoubtely.

Science upholds the view that every living being is continually giving off particles of its body. The particles are subtle and invisible. Every living body is pouring out a rain of

physical particles, and is receiving, in return, an impact of the same, given out by other living bodies. If this be true, it is of the utmost importance that the enveloping sheath of particles in vibration which affect the man and his neighbours should be rendered pure as far as possible. From the outermost covering of the human body known in the Shastras as the *annamaya kosha* (food-formed sheath) these particles are projected. From an inner sheath next below this one, called *Prânamaya Kosha,* the sheath of vital energies, waves of energy are continually projected into space. These two sets of projectiles have to be rigidly taken care of, so that they may not turn out to be poisoned arrows.

Baba Premanand Bharati goes further and states that the mind constantly irradiates spoke-like rays which surround a man for the width of about a cubit and constitute what is known as his "aura". It is said that the rays (of this aura) form a perfect photograph of mental images, a faithful record of the man's thoughts and character. This is supposed to be the invisible album of pictures (Chitra Gupta) that sages can decipher and interpret. The necessity and importance of preserving the body, Pranas, and the mind, pure, is thus becoming established by the slow discoveries of science. We thus get a glimpse of why our ancient injunctions were so elaborate and so particular about the objects to be touched and avoided, and about the distances to be kept between holy and unclean persons. No bath, however elaborate, was deemed enough, by itself, to ensure purity. It was laid down that it should

invariably be supplemented by proper *mantras* and *stotras*. While the baths made the skin pure, the Shastras enjoined, peremptorily, that sacred recitals should be made during and after the bath, to steady and purify the mind. By proper vibrations, supposed to be of a magnetic character, they were to purify the Pránas, (vital energies) too. Such is the outline of the theory.

While Smarthas and Aiyangars hold numerous richly endowed temples under their management, the Mádhwas are decidedly unlucky and poor in that respect. But they have a few good ones in South Canara and elsewhere. As an invaluable compensation, they have the Sri Krishna Shrine at Udupi, and this is a gem whose value cannot be overestimated. Every Hindu knows *ad nauseum* all about temples and Poojaries. It is a doleful tale, without a single redeeming feature about it, of misappropriated funds, violated trusts, irreverent Poojaries, and shameless dancing girls. But Sri Madhva fashioned the Udupi temple on a new plan altogether. He made it the model of its kind. Eight ascetics act therein as Poojaries by well-regulated rotation. They are powerless to delegate their duties to hired underlings. Sri Madhva set the example and led the way. His precepts and examples left nothing to be desired. The formulæ of worship in every temple managed by Mádhvas, and in every household of theirs, are but leaves taken from the book of the Udupi temple. The unkempt Poojari dressed in a silk cloth which has never known water at all, is a rare phenomenon in Mádhva temples. The dancing girl with her meretrecious gestures and gaudy tinsel, is an unknown factor among them.

Sri Madhva attached the greatest importance to an intelligent study of the Shastras. He cared not for Vedic recital as a mere feat of memory. He gave no encouragement to the time-honoured practice of committing volumes of Vedas to memory without the least idea of their meaning. Brahmins of other sects hurl this as a reproach that very few Mâdhvas are great Vedic reciters. While the percentage of Vedic reciters is undoubtedly small in this sect, the proportion of earnest and ardent students of sacred works is very much larger than in other sects. Most Mâdhvas begin from Mani-Manjari, and Madhva-Vijaya, and wade patiently and enthusiastically through the whole range of Dwaita literature. They have, on the whole, a more intimate acquaintance with the main articles of their native faith than the average Hindu of other systems. This observation requires to be greatly qualified, having regard to the radical changes brought on by English education in modern times. The statement is nevertheless true in the main, even after making due allowance for the new leaven causing a general ferment.

It has been remarked that Mâdhvas pay more attention to Itihasas and Puranas than to the Vedas. Sri Madhva has expressly enjoined on his followers to fill up the Vedic studies with Itihasas and Puranas. He regarded the Vedanta course incomplete without the latter. As the Ramanuja people attach a special value and merit to Srimad Valmiki Ramayana, so Mâdhvas treat Mahâbhârata and Bhâghavata with peculiar esteem. Sri Madhva has left a metrical synopsis of the great epic (Mahâbhârata), laying stress on the morale and import of all the obscure passages of the original. His

view is that the language of Mahâbhârata is capable of ten different interpretations, many of which are of great esoteric value. The reader will find that this remarkable work is indeed a marvel in the world of books. Mahâbhârata is not a History or a story-book in the ordinary sense. It is an epitome of "Universe-History." I mean, that it gives an account of the universe such as no other book attempts to give. It is the history of the evolution of the universe, dealing with the physical, moral, astral, and spiritual planes. It deals with eons upon eons of time. It deals with enormous worlds in their forward and backward journey, tracing the history of nature from the womb of God through the egg of Brahma, and the creation of elementals, onward and ever onward, through enormous cycles of Krita, Treta, Dwapar, and Kali ages, up to the great dissolution (Mahapralaya). Dealing with events in this manner, this great book speaks of events and incidents that look like legends for poor mortals of the iron age. Sri Madhva pays special homage to this book as standing on a footing of equality with, if not superiority to, the Vedas. He declares himself implicitly following its footsteps. As furnishing a key to the Vedic system, it is a wonderful book, *par Excellence.* To men and women, and especially to those who have not the time and the energy to crack the hard nuts of the technical Shastras, Mahâbhârata and its epitome, are soul-lifting volumes. Dr. F. A. Hassler of America says of Mahâbhârata, "In all my experience in life, I have not found a work that has interested me as much as that noble production of the wise, and I do not hesitate to say, inspired, men of ancient India. In fact, I have studied it more than any other work for a long time

past, and have made at least 1000 notes which I have arranged in Alphabetical order, for the purposes of study. The Mahâbhârata has opened to me, as it were, a new world, and I have been surprised beyond measure at the wisdom, truth, knowledge, and love of the right, which I have found displayed in its pages. Not only so, but I have found many of the truths which my own heart has taught me in regard to the Supreme Being and His creations, set forth in beautiful, clear, language."

When Latin was displaced by vernacular prayers and sermons, Europe was convulsed by the change. The influence of the mother-tongue in the conduct of religious service was simply incalculable. It marked an epoch in European history, fraught with momentous issues. The Tamil Prabandhams of the Ramanuja school, marked, likewise, a reformation on very wholesome lines. It pulled away the mystic veil from the bright face of knowledge. It enabled women and illiterate people to drink of what was, till then, a forbidden spring. Canarese works and songs have similarly done an immense service to Mâdhvas. Illustrious is the roll of devotees, who have, from time to time, poured out their heart's best inspirations, in devotional songs of a soul-stirring character. The noble work of Sri Madhva has been zealously perpetuated by this illustrious band, from Vyâsarâya, Vâda Raja, Purandara Doss, and a host of Bhaktas, whose utterances are gems of the purest ray serene in the sacred literature of this sect. Anybody that has visited Tirupati during the Brahmotsavam festival, knows the groups of maddened Mâdhva devotees singing away and dancing away, all day long, and all night long,

delirious with joy, and intoxicated by the love of God. Sri Madhva set the example of Sankeertan dance to the tune of various metres by his well-known "Dwadasa Stotram." His successors continued it in Sanskrit as well as Canarese poetry. Two centuries later, Lord Gouranga of Navadweep, conquered Bengal by Sankeertan parties of 'Haribole.' In Tirupati and Jagannath, the living fire of this devotion is prominently observable and enjoyable. The institution derived its origin from Sri Madhva's time and lives with great vitality and vigour among the sect, though other religious founders have also adopted the practice, in recent times. When the heart thus surrenders itself in a genuine Sankeertan song and dance, the soul feels lifted up to great elevations of purity.

Before concluding this short review of some of the good points observable in this small sect, a reference to the godly regard that the members of this sect cherish for their spiritual teachers (Guroo) should not be forgotten. I admit that this is peculiarly a Hindu trait. But under the inspiration of Sri Madhva, this trait has come to be strongly accentuated.

"यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ"

"Similar to the supreme devotion to God, should be the devotion to the teacher," is the sacred injunction, marked, of course, by a due sense of proportion, as the gloss takes care to add. No Mādhva is pure unless and until he receives spiritual initiation at the hands of a teacher. He is not qualified for any holy acts, until he has studied at least the Sootra Bhashya of Sri Madhva, in the presence of

a Guru and with the technical formalities. From this moment of initiation, this Guru, dead or alive, is a saint for the pupil. The Guru may be after all an ignorant man, poorly read, and addicted to worldly ties, but the pupil dares not offend him or cross his wishes, on pain of hell. The command of Manu is literally laid to heart and very strictly adhered to in practice.

"Of the Progenitor, and the giver of the knowledge of Brahman, the latter is the more venerable father; for the birth of the Brahman in the Brahmin is verily eternal both here and after death."

Hostile critics are fond of observing that the Mâdhva is a narrow-minded creature, who is nothing if not bigoted. Sri Madhva condemned the system of Sri Sankara with all the vehemence of which he was capable, as he considered Advaita to be totally destructive and subversive of the very spirit and essence of Theism. He considered that Sri Sankara did the world enormous mischief by promulgating his Monistic system. To this day, a spirit of intolerance does mark the orthodox followers of Sri Madhva. They will tolerate anything, but not Monism, and the reasons are obvious. Some people fancy that because a Sringeri abbot robbed Sri Madhva of his library, the latter vented his wrath by denunciation. Others say that it is the bitter persecution of Mâdhvas in the time of the early "renegades", that left a deep wound which has never healed since. So far as the founder is concerned, the critics are wholly wrong in attributing any rancour or malice to him. He does not seem to have suffered any personal wrongs of such an aggravated nature as to lose temper and balance, and hurl anathemas in fury. Nor did he

in fact indulge in fulminations as is often supposed. It was due to the exigencies of his strong convictions that he had to condemn Monism, and this alone, he did, with unrelenting logic. John Stuart Mill has condemned Hamilton in language far more bitter.

Baba P. Bharati (speaking of Vivarta Vada, illusive appearance-theory) says "This new Vedantic thought has done and is doing more harm to the world than any other religious theory. It is a worse delusion than the delusion of Maya."

It is far from my intention to make out that Mâdhvas are paragons of perfection. They share, with Brahmins in general, the foibles and failings characteristic of the class, with a sprinkling of additional weaknesses perhaps, due to their spirit of exclusiveness. But my object in the foregoing remarks of this chapter is to indicate what this small community owes to its great founder. It reflects undying credit on Sri Madhva that he inculcated principles of virtue and righteousness, among his adherents, together with a spirit of genuine piety and whole-hearted devotion. His code is so framed as to lay stress on the failings and weaknesses of man and to educate him towards progress and the goal. It illustrates the truth of various positions individually accentuated by recent western thinkers, of Kant for example, who says that religion is the sanction for duty, of the German philosopher who traced religion to a sense of absolute dependence and passiveness, and of Mathew Arnold, who defined Religion as morality touched by emotion, ethics heightened, enkindled, and lit up by feelings. Even the District

Manual of South Canara, written by Mr. J. Sturrock I. C. S. sums up a short review of Sri Madhva's teachings by observing that this sect is distinguished by a high code of morality. This, of course, is no partisan testimony. However little we may deserve the encomium at present, there can be no doubt that a true believer in Sri Madhva cannot help leading a life of simple living, high thinking, and noble doing.

CHAPTER III.

THE WAVES OF VAISHNAVAISM.

A BIRD'S-EYE-VIEW FROM A LAYMAN'S STAND-POINT.

Just as intellectual giants arose and revolutionized thought in Europe in the middle ages and in the reign of Elizabeth, so, some remarkable personages appeared in medieval India and revolutionized religious thought, by successive waves of doctrinal and ritualistic reforms.

Sri Ramanuja, Sri Madhva, and Sri Chaitanya, are three names held dear by vast communities of people, and worshipped by thousands, if not millions, of Hindus wherever Vaishnavaism is known. These three restored Vaishnavaism to pristine purity, and popularized the faith throughout the length and breadth of this land.

It may be that Sri Sankara himself was a Vaishnavite, so far as his Monistic philosophy permitted him to adore a personal god. His date is however involved in mystery. It is difficult to decide whether he lived 2000 years ago, or was born so recently as 788 A. D. Opinions are widely devergent on this point.

In the year 1088 A. D., the great Ramanuja was born, of obscure parents, at Sri Perumbudoor in Chingleput District. He was a remarkable personage in every way. He is deemed an Avatar of Sesha by his followers. He inherited no fortune to invest him with an artificial position. His genius asserted itself even while studying under an Adwaita teacher, Yadava Prakasa. Though he

married and became a householder according to custom and fashion, his thoughts were ever bent inward and heavenward. Home had little attractions for him. He had some quarrels with his wife whose temparament was unsuited to his tastes and pursuits. He renounced worldly life, and became a self-ordained Sanyasin in the very prime of life.

This Acharaya lived to a ripe old age of 128 years. His was a long life of activity and reform. He tackled the problems of life and death with masterly firmness and vigour, and forced a following. He converted the guru of his youth to his faith. By a polemical disputation that lasted for 18 days, he vanquished Yagna Moorthy of Banares, and initiated him as Deva Rajamuni. He wrote an elaborate commentary on the Brahma Sootras, called Sri Bhashya, in refutation of Sri Sankara's work, besides other works, to put down the Adwaita doctrine.

It is not easy to condense within a few paras, the life-work of a teacher like Sri Ramanuja. To understand him, it would be necessary to study the history of the times, and the chief personalities that preceded his advent. To understand him, we should carry ourselves to the period, and obtain a glimpse of contemporary history with reference to the ideas political moral, social, and religious, that ruled the period. Such a detailed notice is beyond the scope of this chapter, even assuming that full materials are available for the purpose.

The times were apparently ripe for the new movement inaugurated by Sri Ramanuja. Vaishnavaism was not unknown before his day. A thousand years before him, Sadagopa's immortal verses had been composed, which, devotees here and there, were cherishing with

fervour. One Nathamuni Swamigal followed in the footsteps of Sadagopa, and left the impress of his great personality on the times, many years before Sri Ramanuja was born. Nathamuni's grandson Yamunacharya was another remarkable teacher. He is the sage known as Nammalwar, to whom Sri Ramanuja pays obeisance in his works. Maha Poorna, Goshti Poorna, Mala Dhara, Vara Ranga, and Saila Poorna, are some of the contemporaries of Sri Ramanuja, to whom he was indebted for valuable instruction in the Sanskrit and Tamil literature of the Vaishnava school. It may thus be presumed that Sri Ramanuja did not spring a novel system of philosophy and religion upon the public. It may be that the teachings of Sri Sankara were dominant, but the sway had not been undisputed. In fact, the Sri Bhashya of this teacher is said to be based on a very ancient commentary called Bodhayana Vritti, a copy of which was glanced through by him at Srinagar in Cashmere.

Within 200 years after Sri Ramanuja, came Sri Madhva, pleading for Vaishnavaism with eloquence and fervour. If Sri Ramanuja moved chiefly in the east coast districts of Southern India, Sri Madhva took possession of the west coast, and made his memorable conquests there. Sri Madhva attacked Monism, the school of Sri Sankara, in the strongholds of Malabar and Canara, and spread his views from Himalayas to Cape Comorin by frequent tours. He lived to a ripe age of 80, and his life-work may he evident from the preceding chapters of this book.

About 200 years after Sri Madhva, came Lord Gouranga alias Krishna Chaitanya of Bengal. This great personage was born in Nadia in the family of a Sanskrit Pandit, in the year 1498 A.D. To this

day, Northern India deifies his name, and holds his memory in sacred reverence. Sri Krishna Chaitanya was at first a precocious boy who mastered grammar and logic with intense avidity, set himself up as a school-master, and led the life of a pedagogue. Soon, he changed his ways. Sri Krishna absorbed his thoughts and took possession of his soul. Sri Chaitanya lived and moved in the countries of Bengal, an embodiment of Bhakti and Prema, too transcendent for words. The merest idea of Sri Krishna, a trifling allusion to Rådhá, a flashing recollection of Brindavan, sent Gouranga into a trance. When he sang and danced, thousands of people followed his steps, and danced likewise in ecstasy. When he spoke of Hari, tears flowed from his eyes in torrents, and every listener felt his hair stand on end, suffused by a joy ineffable. What he preached, more by example than by precept, was Dualist Vaishnavaism, etherial and pure.

Thus, one wave after another of Vaishnavaism passed over the country, overwhelming, submerging, and destroying, the landmarks of antagonistic schools, and establishing fresh landmarks in their place. From the 10th to the 16th century, medieval India was charged by the electric currents of Vaishnavaism, to an extent, and in a measure, probably unkown at any previous period of Indian History. Three successive teachers appeared within intervals of about 200 years each, and appealed to the hearts of the people with a fervour that produced remarkable results.

It would be a most interesting study to trace the evolution of these phases of Vaishnavaism from stage to stage, if historical information were available in

full measure for the purpose. But poor as the available materials are, it is possible just to see that the history of Vaishnavaism during these 600 years, is the history of a vigorous Protestantism set on foot by great heroes, and that each phase of this Protestantism is a logical growth out of the pre-existing phase.

The Vaishnava is a pure Vedantin because he believes in the supreme authority of the Vedas. Sri Madhva insists that every word and every syllable of the Vedas denotes and connotes Vishnu, even the sections which profess to deal with sacrifices and rituals. By some misapprehension due probably to European Sanskritists, who knew Adwaita alone, the term Vedanta is often used to denote only the school of Sri Sankara. This however is an obvious error. Swami Vivekananda observes (P. 452) "Unfortunately, there is a mistake committed many times in modern India, that the word Vedanta has reference only to the Adwaitist system. It is wrong to confine the word Vedanta only to one system which has arisen out of the Upanishads. The Ramanujist has as much right to be called a Vedantist as the Adwaitin."

The characteristic feature of Vaishnavaism is that it is a staunch defender of theism, and attacks the strongholds of atheism in all its aspects It is a sworn enemy of the Charvaka, the great upholder of materialism. It tolerates no compromise with Budhism and Jainism, neither of which acknowledges the Veda and a personal God. It protests against polytheism and pantheism as subversive of true theism. Interpreters of Adwaita have often taken considerable trouble to prove that that system does not differ in essence from Arhat or Budhist systems. While Vaishnavas hurl this as a reproach,

Adwaitins have of late come to regard it as a compliment. T. Subba Rao, a great expounder of Adwaita and Esoteric Budhism, says, that the whole difference between Budhistic and Vedantic philosophies was, that the former was a kind of rationalistic Vedantism, while the latter might be regarded as Transcendental Budhism." He observes further: "There is only one permanent condition in the universe, which is the state of perfect unconsciousness. The Arhat cosmogony accounts for the evolution of manifested solar systems from undifferentiated cosmic matter, and Adwaita cosmogony accounts for the evolution of Bahi Pragna from the original Chinmatra. The Adwaitic cosmogony is the complement of Arhat cosmogony. The eternal principle is precisely the same in both systems and they agree in denying the existence of an extra-cosmic God." Later on, he speaks of "Sankararcharya, as the greatest occult and adept of all the ages, the founder of Adwaitism, the master whose followers are to this day referred to as "*Prachanna Boudhas*", Budhists in disguise, so identical are the two teachings, etc. etc.

The Vaishnava is aggrieved that a school of thought purporting to be based on the Vedas, and known as Vedanta, should be, in fact, Budhism in disguise. He shrinks from Monism because it reduces God into a state of unconsciousness or of void. Sri Madhva found it no better than Soonya and Atheism, and raised an emphatic protest against it. T. Subba Rao says "the *something*, or rather, the *nothing* called spirit, has by itself no form or forms. Can a 'void' be annihilated? What is pure absolute spirit but the void of the ancient Greek philosophers? Well,

says Lucretius, there can be no third thing besides body and void, for if it be to the smallest extent tangible, it is body; if not, it is void." These views indentifying Adwaita now with Budhism and now with the theory of void, gradually lost their hold on the people. The natural craving for worship, the prayerful self-surrender, asserted itself in the rise and growth Vaishnavaism. It may be that the seccessions arose not only because of heresies in doctrine but of abominations in practice. To trace it purely to the latter cause is however is a misapprehension.

"The one without a second" on which Monism is built, is, according to Sri Ramanuja, Sri Madhva, and other Dualists, the great Vishnu of the scriptures, who is of peerless elevation. Of all the gods and demigods in the Pantheon, the Vaishnavas say, Vishnu, Narayana, Krishnai, Hari, and other synonyms, denote the Supreme Spirit, whether He chooses to take a form or remain the abstrct unseeable, omnipresent spirit, in which the universe lives, moves, and has its being.

Christian Missionaries often ignore the Brahmanical view of "the one God," and choose to tar all Hindus with the same brush by calling them Polytheists. Sri Madhva does not admit the right of any of the so-called gods to a position of true Divinity. Devas are mere flashing intelligences, superior Jeevas endowed with light, knowledge, and power more than man possesses, but infinitely inferior to God. Their abodes are not Heaven in the true sense. A Christian writer, Thos. Foulkes, has a fair glimpse of the true position when he says: "They (the gods) earned their elevation to the Heavens, with its

accompanying immorality, by their austerities and righteousness, and their continuance in that exaltation was subject to the usual contingencies. Their immortality too was intermittent, and passed away with all the other things of time, at the end of each divine period of the world, to be renewed, however, with them when the seeds of the new heavens and the new earth begins to germinate, at the rising of the new Brahma, in the navel-lotus of Narayana, at the dawn of each succeeding dispensation."

The pivot on which Vaishnavaism rests, is Bhakti, or Prapatti. The grief-stricken soul suffering the agonies of Samsara, seeks solace in a religion which inculcates a true, hearty, communion with God. Pantheism offered a mere caricature of this communion, and people began to shrink from it. "Why do we shrink from Pantheism," asks Richard Armstrong, and answers the question, saying, "not from a dread of losing the physical universe in God, but from a dread of losing our souls in God. Pantheism only becomes deadly to vigorous religion and morality, when it makes the man's soul, the man's self, a portion of God. Theism claims that the human soul is a free cause, a separate island of the individual will, in the midst of the great ocean of the Divine will. Leave us man confronting God, not absorbed in Him, and the conditions are preserved for the ethical life of the individual and also for the communion of the soul with God as another than itself, the very possibility of which is destroyed if a separate personality is wiped out."

A belief in a personal God, and in Jeevas separate from and dependent on God, characterises the followers of Sri Ramanuja, Sri Madhva, and Sri Chaitanya.

An extinction of the individual soul is looked upon with horror. It is evident that these three great teachers struck a deep chord in the hearts of the people, which vibrated in sympathetic response. Every one of them travelled from Badari to Rameswaram, met the leading Pandits of the day, and convinced them of their heresies. Each polemical victory was an epoch-making event followed by a commotion that was felt far and wide. Sri Ramanuja's success in Benares over the greatest Adwaitin of the day, Yagnamoorthy by name, sent a thrill through the length and breadth of India. Sri Madhva's triumphs in Southern India and Benares, were productive of still more striking results. An illustrious roll of Pandits, among whom were the brightest luminaries, of the day, including Vasudeva, Budhi Sagara, Vidya Sankara, Sobhana Bhatta, Sami Sastry, Trivikrama Pandit, Padma Theertha, and Pundareeka Puri, tried their best, and failed signally. Several of them courageously came into his fold; their example served as a beacon-light to the common folk who had all along had misgivings about Monism, but were unable to take action for want of leaders to set the example.

Sri Krishna Chaitanya gave a crushing defeat to the great Pandit, Vasudeva Sârvabhouma of Jagannath, and to Prakasananda Saraswati of 10000 disciples, at Banares. His biographer says that before his eloquent and forcible explanations, the conceited opponents were utterly unable to support Adwaita, notwithstanding the fact that they were men of matchless erudition. These towering Sanyasins always took the enemies' citadals by storm, and carried conviction to millions of people. The intellectual *melees* that

we hear of in the age under consideration, were no uninteresting dry-as-dust disputations, but were events fraught with far-reaching results.

The reaction in favour of the Personal God produced quite a revolution in temple-worship. Sri Ramanuja re-orgainsed the chief Vishnu temples of Southern India on a reformed model. Into Conjeevaram and Srirangam, he replaced Vaikhanasa by the Pancharatra methods of Pooja. He founded the temple of Tiru Narayana Puram, and made it a model of Vaishnava worship. Vishnu Vardhana of Mysore became a convert, and laid his services and resources at the disposal of the Guru. This enabled Sri Ramanuja to carry out his ideas and projects, in a manner and with a degree of perfection, he could not well command in his native country. It is said that this sovereign was so devoted to Sri Ramanuja and became so staunch a convert, that he destroyed as many as 790 Jain Basties in his kingdom, and gave a crushing blow to this religion. The result must have been an enormous accession of strength to the new movement. That the influence of the king and the guru was vast, might be judged from an anecdote recorded of the image installed in this temple. It is said that the image (of Sri Rama Priya) was in worship in the palace of the Mahommadan Princess of Delhi. Sri Ramanuja went there and begged of the royal lady to part with the idol. Naturally enough, there was hesitation. But the earnest prayer of the master set the image in motion. They say that Sri Rama Priya walked with gentle steps in response to the call of Sri Ramanuja, and this miracle decided the issue. After the idol was brought down to Mysore, the

princess and her brother followed, utterly broken-hearted at the separation. The prince is said to be the Kabir Doss so well known to fame.

A new epoch opened in the history ot the Vishnu temples that came into the possession and management of this sect. A fervour, hitherto unknown, galvanized society. It was felt that a refreshing change had come about, fascinating and thrilling to a degree. The articles of the new creed inculcating the view that the sanctified idol was a special Avatar of God, and accentuating the necessity of self-surrender in emotional prayer, lent a new charm and spell to religious life and infused health and tone into the dead bones of fossilized worship. In the hands of the reformer, the re-organised temple was an ally of enormous power, harmonizing, as it beautifully did, with the spirit of the new faith.

Sri Madhva did not underrate the importance of image-worship in sanctified temples. One day, when he was sitting in meditation on the sands of the sea-shore, an image of Sri Krishna came into his possession, almost by a miracle. It had belonged to Dwaraka, and had been worshipped by Sri Rukmani. He installed it in a small temple at Udipi, and founded eight Matams to take charge of Sri Krishna's worship. He legislated suitable formulas of worship to regulate every detail of the Divine Service. He rendered it impossible for the idol to be contaminated by unholy touch. He did not forget the least important particular, connected with the hours of Puja, the postures of devotion, the hymns and prayers to be recited, the decorations at every one of the nine. Poojas of every day, the offerings of flowers, fruits, and dishes,

to be made on each occasion, and the magnificent hospitality which was to mark and adorn Sri Krishna's service. One who sees the courses, absolutely forgets that it is but an idol that is being served. Every honour and every homage that the mind of man can conceive of, to glorify an Emperor of Emperors, if present in flesh and blood is paid with tireless patience and obeisance, day after day, in total forgetfulness of the fact that it is after all an image that stands before them. Where can the world show a parallel to Sri Krishna's temple at Udupi ?

Thus the propagation of Vaishnavaism was made in various ways, by means of original treatises, controversial conquests, and reformed temples. The members of the new faith were called on to bear on their persons, prominently visible symbols of their faith. If they believed in Vishnu, why hesitate to bear the insignia, and proclaim their beliefs to the world ? The men were bold to a fault. Their belief was sturdy. They cared two straws for the cynic's sneer and the Charvaka's contumely. Vishnu was their goal, their all in all. They gave themselves Vishnu's names, they daubed themselves with Vishnu's symbols, and branded themselves with Vishnu's weapons, in order to keep themselves constantly in touch with the memory of Vishnu. Even in modern India, these external shells of Vaishnavaism are present, though alas ! the kernel, the vital spirit, that animated the early propagators, seems either dead or is in suspended animation.

Ancient Bhâttas that preceded Sri Sankara, laid stress on Karmic sacrifices as the salvation of men. They took their stand on the Karma Kanda of the Vedas, and pleaded for endless rituals. All religious

activities centred on Karma as the pivot, all energies were directed towards devising, organising, and performing, some sacrificial rite or other, to the utter neglect of the Upanishads. Sri Sankara shifted the centre of gravity of Brahminicial activity to a different point. He pleaded for 'Gnana' or knowledge, as the saviour, as the only panacea for the ills of humanity. The successive phases of Vaishnavaism brought about another shift, by laying the greatest emphasis on Bhakti as the most effectual instrument of emanciption. It may be that the three schools of Vaishnavaism have differences amongst themselves. But it is common ground for them that self-surrender is the true path, and that the Lord's grace is the salvation of humanity.

Sri Madhva recognizes the importance of true Karma, of Gnana, and of Bhakti, and classifies all devotees as Karma Yogins, Gnana Yogins, and Bhakti Yogins, though not in the sense in which Bhâttas and Monists understand the expressions.

It may be thus seen that each succeeding wave of religious thought is a logical outcome of the preceding currents and waves of thought, embodying, assimilating and improving on them, and endeavouring to harmonize the scriptural teachings on the point. Before concluding this bird's-eye-view of Vaishnavaism and of the teachers who brought about a renaissance in medieval India, it may not be out of place and without interest to trace in the barest outline, the inter-relation of the teachings of the various schools, with a view to see how, and why, and in what respects, the several teachers promulgated somewhat divergent views *Inter se.* He who runs may read that Sri Sankara was a rigid

upholder of caste. He was extremely jealous of Brahmninical privileges. He did little to shatter the barriers that kept spiritual knowledge beyond the ken of non-Brahmins. He upheld the exclusiveness of caste and perpetuated the monopolies of priest-craft. The pendulum of reform oscillated towards a great reaction under Sri Ramanuja's impulse. He opened gate ways in the fence and made room for devotees, irrespective of caste, creed, or colour and allowed them to enter the fold and batten on the pastures of Vedanta. His large-hearted reform converted a Mahommadan Prince and Princess into Bhaktâs, and gave to the world the blessings of a Kabir to bestir the soul to the profoundest depths of Prapatti.

Within a century or two after Sri Ramanuja, the pendulum moved back again. It was probably felt that a promiscuous admission of people, irrespective of birth and qualifications, was productive of havoc, and was opposed to the spirit of scriptural injunctions and to the immemorial traditions of the land. Sri Madhva closed most of the gate-ways and pleaded again for secrecy and exclusiveness under certain limitations. Sri Krishna Chaitanya sent the pendulum of reform swinging back much farther than the point to which Sri Ramanuja had carried it. He threw salvation open to all, to the whole world, wherever born and whatever the caste. He counted Brahmins, non-Brahmins, Mahommadans, and Parayas among his devoted adherents. He sent his missiles of 'Haribole' into any vehicle, and caused it to dance to the tune of a divine music. Even the barber who was shaving Sri Chaitanya's head at the time he was taking orders, got the infection of Hari Bhakti

and could not complete shaving operation before he had danced in ecstasy two or three times in the middle of the process.

Analogous to these varying movements of reform, among the Aiyangars, and even among Madhvas, minor secessions are not unknown, upholding liberalisation, or exclusiveness, in alternation. There have been Thengalais revering Tamil Prabandhams on a footing of equality with the Vedas, and Vadagalais opposing the view. Among Madhvas, there has been the subtle conflict of Dasakootas and Vyasakootas, the former regarding Canarese and vernacular works with peculiar sanctity, and the latter looking askance at the view as somewhat heretical.

It may be remembered that both Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhva attack all the Gods but Vishnu, of the Polytheistic hierachy, and dethrone them to subordinate ranks. There is however a noteworthy difference between them in respect to the position they assign to Siva. It is not improbable that the personal history, and the social and religious environments, of each, lent a tinge of colour to their respective views. A Chola King, Krimikanta by name, inaugurated a bloody persecution of Sri Ramanuja's sect. The teacher was forced to banish himself for 12 long years from Srirangam, and live away in Tiru Narayanapuram, and the neighbourhood. The tyrant was a most bigoted Saiva who threw himself heart and soul into the task of exterminating Vaishnavas. Two of Sri Ramanuja's adherents, Mahapurna and Alwan by name, offered themselves as victims to the Moloch, in order to save their Guru. The hard-hearted monarch plucked their

eyes from the sockets, and sent them home, blinded for ever. This is a fair sample of religious intolerance similar to what disgraced the pages of European history in the middle ages and in the time of Luther and Calvin. To this day, no member of the Ramanuja sect visits a Saivite temple or speaks of Siva with devotion. Among the golden utterances of this teacher, (collected in C. R. Srinivasa Aiyangar's, book, p. 72) the injunction is forcibly repeated again and again that no God but Vishnu should be adored or respected.

Sri Madhva's attitude towards Siva is very different. He found that Siva was the popular deity of the country He was probably born a Shivalli Saivite himself. He found South Canara in particular full of temples where the Lingam was the idol of worship, and Bootastans, invariable adjuncts thereof. In the Ananteswara, Chandramouleswara, Kanana Devata, Veda Bandeswara temples, where he often worshipped in his youth, it is the Lingam that forms the image, though some of these Lingams are considered to be representations of Vishnu and not of Siva. In Sri Madhva's system, Siva occupies one of the highest ranks, he being placed next to the Four-faced Brahma, Vayu, and their consorts. Mādhvas freely visit the temple of Siva, and worship this deity. There is not the least trace of rancour in any references or allusions to this deity in Madhva writings.

It does not appear that the Vaishnavaism of Sri Madhva was a plagiarism from the teachings and tenets of Sri Ramanuja. If there is any place in Southern India where the Aiyangar community is conspicuous by its absence, it is Canara. Sri Madhva built his

system on his own interpretations of the Upanishad, Geeta, and Sootra, Prasthanas. A large and influential community of Brahmins following the Bhagavata Sampradayam, inhabited Canara, and form even now a large percentage of Brahmins in the district. They may be readily identified by the *namas* they wear, which are exactly like those of Madhvas, except that the *mudras* are absent. It may be, that Sri Madhva did not change the *namas*, but simply added the Vaishnavaite marks of stamping the *namas* with the symbols of Vishnu. It is worthy of note that the followers of Bhaghavata Sampradayam hold Siva and Vishnu to be of equal position and dedicate temples to deities in the combined names, such as Hari Hara, Sankra Narayana, and so on.

Coming next after Sri Sankara, the school of Sri Ramanuja shows leaning towards Adwaita in some respects, as its name imports. The theory is generally known as Visishtadwaita. It is said to be Adwait though with a difference. Para Brahman in this school, is often described as the *material* and *efficient* cause of the world. It is difficult to see how God can be the material cause, in any school of Dualism. In this and some other respects, Sri Madhva differs from Sri Ramanuja. With regard to the individual souls for example, Sri Vaishnavas hold them capable of Infinite knowledge and bliss, and say that when the final release occurs, all the released souls enjoy bliss in an equal measure of perfection, equal to God himself. Sad Vaishnavas (*i. e.*, Madhvas) do not grant this. To them, the idea of Jeevatmas ever reaching a footing of equality with God, in point of bliss or any other respect, is repugnant. The drift of Sri Madhva's Dualism is to separate souls and matter

from Parabrahman by a gulf of infinite difference and contrast. 'Man is man, and God is God, and the twain will never be One', is the refrain of Dualism.

The theory of *Mayic* illusion propounded by Sri Sankara's school, seems to have so violently offended Sri Ramanuja, that he pulled it up, root and branch, and cast it to the winds. While Adwaitins maintained the unreality of the Universe, by reason of Maya (illusion), Visishtadwaitins took up a position of diametrical opposition, and maintained that there is no such thing as illusion in the world at all, in matters mundane or divine. They held that even the silver-in-the-mother-of-pearl and the snake-in-the-rope are realities and not illusory. In this respect, Sri Madhva occupies a position of golden mean. With him, the world is real, and not illusory. But it is not impossible that illusion or misapprehension should occur when the senses and the mind are diseased, and sufficient cause exists, to produce a perverted perception or experience. He was not prepared to hold that when a rope is imagined to be a snake, that the snake exists in reality in the rope, and is not a mere figment of the imagination.

Sri Râmanuja deemed it possible that the Almighty God might incarante as imperfect Avatars. For instance, they say that Anirudha, Pradyumna, and Sankarshana possess the divine attributes, only in part. Mâdhvas consider that the Supreme God is *perfect* in all His Avatars, and that there is not the slightest trace of a difference between one form and another of the God's great manifestations.

The Sri Bhashya recognizes and approves of the distinction drawn by the Sankarite school, between

the Karma-Kanda and the Gnana-Kanda of the Vedas. It is said that the drift and aim of each is different, and that the Upanishads alone deal with God and with the Path. Sri Madhva holds that the distinction does not exist, that the import of all the Vedas is the same, and that every syllable and every sound of the Vedas sings the praise of God.

Sri Chaitanya steered clear of these subtleties. He did not trouble himself to build up a system or think of details for a code of religion. His life shows that he was an uncompromising Dualist (Dwaiti). His biographer writes (p. IX)" Gouranga taught his followers to regard with abhorrence and loathing, the doctrine which makes the extinction of the soul, or what is practically the extinction of the soul, the goal of life." He frequently held debates with Monists and vanquished them. He insisted that Bhakti and Prema alone could save the soul and not mere Gnan, much less Adwaitic knowledge. He taught the world that the position taken up by " तत्वमसि " 'that thou art', is true in the sense that He and the Jeeva belong to each other, and are indissolubly wedded to each other, by eternal ties. Every devotee should pray " I am thine, " " Thou are mine, " so that he may feel himself attracted to God as parent, child, friend, lover, all rolled into one, by the ties of eternal kinship and undying love.

Some people say that Sri Chaitanya derived his ideas from Sri Vaishnavas. Others say that he was a Mâdhva. Swami Vivekananda is disposed to regard him as a Mâdhva Dualist, rather than a Visishtadwaitin. He speaks of our Acharya as "the great Madhva whose leadership was recognized even by the followers of the only Northern Prophet whose power hass been

felt over the length and breadth of India, Sri Krishna Chaitanya." It would appear that Sri Chaitanya wrote an independent commentary on the Brahma Sootras. Swami Vivekananda says "The commentry that Sri Chaitanya wrote on the Vyasa Sootras has either been lost or not found yet. His disciples joined themselves to the Mâdhvas of the South."

That there are however well-marked differences between Chaitanya's school on the one hand, and both the Vaishnavaite schools of the south, on the other, hardly admits of doubt. It is not easy to say that the Northern Prophet borrowed any set of beliefs or practices, *en-bloc*, from Sri Vaishnavas or Sad Vaishnavas, though striking similarities of doctrine appear on most of the essential points, in all the three schools of thought.

The reader will find abundant food for reflection in the history of these great Luthers. No history is possible in the common-place course of mundane life. Where men simply pursue the even tenour of the way, where the despotism of custom reduces everything to a dead level, rounds off angularities then and there, smoothens individuality, and compresses the genius in the iron vice of uniformity just as they deal with the lady's foot, up in China, history is entirely out of place. But the great man subdues circumstances and rises above them to tower high and rule his fellows. He is the master, not the slave, of his surroundings. He cuts out a path for himself and creates a history.

Sri Ramanuja, Sri Madhva, and Sri Chaitanya were great personalities of this stamp, who broke through the fetters of custom, and boldly struck into

paths of original research and useful reform. During the six hundred years under review, many a man of mighty intellect led the world of thought. It is usual to taunt the East as vegetating in a slough of stagnation. John Smart Mill finds genius possible only in an atmosphere of freedom. What there was in this particular age, so conducive to the growth of genius, it is difficult to say. But the fact is undoubtedly clear, that it was an age of mighty intellects and dashing progress. Besides the great masters noticed in these pages, it may be remembered that there were others too, for instance, Vidyaranya the great Vedic commentator of the Adwaita school, Vedanta Desikar of Ramanuja sect, and Jaya Theerthacharya the great commentator of the Madhva school, who lived as contemporaries in the 14th century.

To this day, the history of these three sects knows of no names greater than these, in the religious literature of the respective schools. It is a remarkable coincidence that Southern India gave birth to three such giants, at the same time, to stand out as vigorous exponents of the respective systems, and cause them to strike root, deep in the hearts of men.

CHAPTER IV.

DWAITA AND CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE.

In the District Manual of South Canara, there is a vague suggestion thrown out that Christianity may have influenced or affected the teachings of Sri Madhva. This random suggestion has been somewhat eagerly seized by some detractors, and amplified by a so-called array of reasons in support of the view. The object is to show that the Dwaita Philosopher of Canara is not a great personage after all, that he possessed little or no originality of views, and that he scrupled not to borrow tenets in disguise from Christianity without acknowledging indebtedness.

The basis for this charge of plagiarism seems, on examination, to be very meagre and intangible. The District Manual which is responsible for the cue devotes very little space to this religious founder and his teachings. It accords but a passing notice to the subject, and does not seem over-anxious to be accurate in its history or comments. It starts by saying that Sri Madhva was born at Kalianpur, a few miles from Udupi. This is utterly wrong. Sri Madhva's birthplace is Pajakakshetra, some miles from Udupi in a *different* direction. History, tradition, monuments, and memorials are unanimous about this. There has been no controversy at all on this point, such as exists, for example, regarding the nativity of Sri Sankara. There has not been the feeblest suggestion anywhere in Maādhva writings or traditions in fovour of Kalianpur. Yet, the District Manual has dreamed of this as the birth-place of Sri Madhva. This inaccuracy is not calculated to impress any one knowing the facts, with

a high regard for the reliableness of the historical sketch contained in the pages of the Manual (page 63). In another place, it is said, that Sri Madhva went over to Vijianagar by the influence of a Sringeri Swami. This is indeed startling news. Sri Madhva was always at daggers drawn with Sringeri Abbots, and courted not their friendship at any time. The idea of receiving a favour from this quarter would have been gall and wormwood to him. Vijianagar was, during the days of Sri Madhva, a petty state of little consequence, and the Sringeri monastery had not yet acquired a strong foot-hold in that state. It was Vidyaranya that gained influence in that court, and Vidyaranya was long after Sri Madhva's time. What an anachronism does this assertion convey then, that Sri Madhva went over to Vijianagar, and this, by the influence of a Sringeri Swami! It is needless to add that there is no mention of this extraordinary incident in Sriman Madhva Vijia. The only solution of this enigma, that I can think of, lies probably in the frequent confusion between Sri Madhva and Mādhava that European scholars fall into. Vidyaranya was known as Mādhavacharya, and he was a Sringeri abbot, and had influence in the court of the Bukkas.

To probablize the suggestion of Christian influence, it is stated that at Kalianpur there was a community of this faith in the 7th century A. D. The words of the Manual are "The moral code of Madhva is a high one, and his teaching is held by some, not ordinary Hindus, of course, to have been affected by the existence of the community of Christians at Kalianpur mentioned by Cosmos Indico Pleustes in the 7th century A. D."

I have already pointed out the error about Kalianpur having been misconceived to be the birth

place of Sri Madhva. It is very doubtful whether any Christian community and a Christian church, did exist in Sri Madhva's days (13th century), and whether he ever came in contact with its votaries or missionaries. Nor is there the slightest basis for the supposition of an intimate acquaintance between the Master and any Christians, in the whole of his career. On this point, another significant passage may be quoted from the same book (Dt. Manual, p. 181). It says "No tradition remains now, among the natives of Canara, of a Christian community existing north of Malabar prior to the Portuguese who made themselves masters in 1526 A.D." This removes all doubts in the matter, and cuts the root of the belief that Sri Madhva and a Christian community were ever thrown together for a friendly exchange of amenities.

So much about the historical basis of the suggestion. The critics do not rest there. Whether there be proof of actual contact, or not, our critics go on to say, there are some stricking coincidences of doctrine between Christianity and "Madhvaism", and some parallel incidents noticeable in the Gospels and the Madhva Vijia are irresistibly significant. These further proofs deserve to be noticed. They are said to be.—

(1) The Christians believe in eternal Hell; so does Sri Madhva.

(2) The Christians believe in salvation through Jesus Christ; Sri Madhva substitutes Vayu for Jesus.

(3) The Gospels speak of Christ's childhood-flight to a temple. Sri Madhva wandered from temple to temple, on a certain occasion, when still a boy.

(4) Sri Madhva spent 48 days in fasting and prayer, before he visited Badaṛi. A similar episode occurs in the Bible.

(5) When entertained by poor people, Sri Madhva performed the miracle of causing a small quantity of food satisfy the hunger of large numbers of people. This corresponds to Christ's feat of multiplying loaves and fishes.

(6) In Madhva Vijia, a certain phrase occurs, which refers to Mâdhvas "angling for souls." This phrase looks Biblical, for, the Christians compare evangelists to anglers of fish.

Of these points, Nos. 1 and 2 alone can be charged at the door of Sri Madhva. The other four are culled from the biography written by an admirer of Sri Madhva. The critic probably thinks that owing to Christian admiration, the biographer invented paralled episodes to enhance Sri Madhva's glory. If so, it is the fault of the biographer, Pandit Narayana, in his zeal to make Sri Madhva shine in borrowed feathers.

Sri Madhva assigns all Tâmasas by nature to eternal hell. He classifies Jeevas into 3 classes, *viz.*, *Sâtwica, Rajasa, and Tamasa.* In the 17th and the 18th chapters of the Bhagavat Geeta, there is an illuminating exposition of the three *gunas* as the bases of a three-fold division. Sri Krishna illustrates the points by a great variety of references. He shows how food, sacrifice, speech, penance, rites, knowledge, duty, agent, Budhi, Dhriti, and happiness, are all three-fold in character, according to Satva, Rajas, and Tamas, dominating in each. He refers to men also divided thus into three classes. The Satwica

goes to Heaven, the Rajasa stays for ever in Samsâra and the Tamasa goes to eternal Hell. This is the logical conclusion of the Hindu Scriptures.

Christianity does not inculcate this three-fold classification. It is a very superficial coincidence indeed, that both believe in an eternal hell. If Sri Madhva borrowed at all, why should he not have borrowed the view of Christianity that salvation is open to all.

The next point which is supposed to be more conclusive, is Sri Madhva's theory of salvation through Vayu. I am not at all sure that in this respect of a supposed intermediary, the Christians and Mâdhvas see eye to eye. Apart from the difference of names, which is nothing, the Christian's idea of Christ's function and position is radically different from that of Vayu, Jesus Christ was a vicarious sufferer. This is unknown to us. Vayu suffers nothing to wipe away the sins of humanity. There is no crucifixion of Vayu as a representative of sinning souls. That idea is purely Christian.

Prâna, the chief of breaths, is a deity adored in the Upanishads as the highest deity next to God. He is a Jeeva, all the same, though he is the best of them. In the theory of involution and evolution, Brahma and Vayu have an important function. As the presiding deity of Jeevas, all Jeevas issue out of Vayu, and are involuted in Vayu, from Kalpa to Kalpa. This is the expression of a scientific fact based on the Hindu idea of creation and dissolution.

Bhaktas are expected to worship God dwelling in Prâna. They cannot reach God directly, in con-

ception. They are advised to think of the Supreme Being that dwells in the vehicular image of Prâna. In daily service, we worship God dwelling in a metallic image, after invoking God's presence therein. The invocation is the most important part of the function, to make sure of God's special presence in the idol. The idols in the shrines of Srirangam and Tirupati are ardently worshipped, because men are sure of the Divine presence in those figures in a special degree. Prâna, the foremost of Jeevas and Bhaktas, is the image in which God's presence is a certainty. Therefore worshippers are asked to adore Narayana the in-dweller of Vayu.

In the system of Sri Chaitanya, the Bhaktas are asked to love God as Radha did. It is laid down that, as man cannot love God as Radha did, he must follow "*in the wake of Radha*". * "Let him contemplate the love that Radha felt for Krishna, and by that, he will be able to acquire the feeling, step by step. Radha is the *medium* through whom human creatures attain to Sri Krishna." Prâna is the best of Yekanta Bhaktas, and it is therefore our duty to follow in his wake. The Râmanujas are not without their Jesus Christ to act as an intermediary in a certain sense. The late Mr. Kasturi Iyengar delivered in the Coimbatore Town Hall a very learned lecture pointing out that 'Sri' or "Lakshmi' corresponded to Jesus Christ, in Visishtadwaita philosophy. I do not know if we will be told that Sri Ramanuja also was guilty of a disguised plagiarism.

The supposed analogy or similarity of incidents referred to as points 3-4-5-6 *supra*, is, it must be allowed, not of much consequence. If we but look

* Vide P. 219 S. Kumar's book.

into the matter, such coincidences and analogies are common in many biographies. It it conceded that the Sankara Vijia of Vidyaranya was produced in imitation of Madhva Vijia. There are many episodes in Sri Sankara's life which look like striking borrowings from Sri Madhva's life. It is said that Sri Sankara, for example, made his disciple Padmapâda walk on the surface of the Ganges as on *Terra Firma*. This is very similar to a feat of the same kind recorded of Sri Madhva. Can it be contended that the one is a copy from the other? Between Madhva's life and Chaitanya's life, there are striking similarities. The story of academical contests and controversial tours looks quite similar. The incident in Sri Madhva's life of the Mahommedan Emperor, who was at first hostile, and who turned a friend, finds a paralled in Sri Chaitanya's history. We are told that Sri Chaitanya often ate huge dinners, when large quantities were offered to him, and he had not the heart to disoblige the host. Madhva is supposed to have frequently performed this feat.

The observation that the simile of the *angler fishing for souls* suggests Christian influence is hardly a serious argument. It is merely a verbal similarity. In page 187 of the "life of Gouranga," the author speaks of him as having attracted the hearts of those present '*as an angler attracts a fish*'.? This is an expression used in "Chaitanya Charitamrita." In page 204, it is observed that he drew men towards him *as an angler draws a fish*. The figure of speech is not one unknown to Sanskrit and Bengali literature, and is not a purely Biblical expression.

That on many a point of doctrine there is similarity between our system and Christianity is not

denied. Both are Dualists and theists, believing in a personal God, who creates, sustains, and destroys the world. Both believe in Heven and Hell. Both believe in the divine grace as the source of life and as the cause of libertation. Both are anti-monistic and both strongly believe in Bhakti and prayers.

At the same time, it must also be remembered that numerous are the points of disagreement too. 'Madhvaism' is purely Hindu in that it believes in Transmigration and Karma, whereas the Christian will not listen to it for a moment. Sri Madhva riveted the bonds of caste, and laid down very rigid rules for Varnas and Asramas. While the Christian considers that God created the world out of nothing, Sri Madhva upholds the Sânkhya view that nothing can come out of nothing. He is purely Hindu in this respect. The theory of *Bandha* and *Moksha* as expounded by Sri Madhva rests on the authority of the Vedas, Itihasas, and Puranas. It is needless to labour the point. No impartial student of the two theologies will confound them as copies of each other, having regard to the impress of Hindu individuality readable in every line of the Mâdhva writings.

Professor Max Muller takes a very sensible view of the matter, and protests against the exaggerated importance given to supposed coincidences. He says at p. 218 of his "Thoughts on life and Religion", "If comparative theology has taught us anything, it has taught us that there is a common fund of truth in all religions, derived from a revelation that was neither confined to one nation, nor miraculous in the usual sense of the word, and that even minute coincidences between the doctrines, nay, between the

external accessories, of various religions, need not be accounted for, at once, by disguised borrowings, but can' be explained by other, and more natural, causes."

CHAPTER V.

DUALISM : COMPARED AND CONTRASTED WITH OTHER HINDU DARSANAS.

In the diversity of doctrines that have had a following in India, and are collectively referred to as Hinduism, if we try to think of any underlying unities, we are struck with the consensus of opinion on two points at least, namely (1) Karma and (2) Metempsychosis. The theistic as well as atheistic creeds of India have mostly pleaded warmly for these two theories, to account for the evolution of man. One notable exception is the *Chârvaka*, who is a thorough materialistic secularist. His system hardly deserves to be called a philosophy, for, he does not care to put forward a reasoned theory of man and the universe.

In reviewing the ancient systems, they are usually classified as Vedic and non-Vedic, according as they admit the authority of the Vedas or not. Bouddha, Pâsupata, and similar systems, do not admit the Vedas as revelations. Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Sânkhya, and Yoga, accept the Vedas as revelations. These four systems of philosophy are agreed in placing special stress and value on reason as the chief guide to knowledge, while the Charvaka accepts (प्रत्यक्ष) direct perception alone, as the source of true knowledge. He relies on reason as a secondary source, whose value lies in (Sambhâvana) probablizing conclusions, Akshapada, Kanada, Kapila and Patanjali, state that "Reasoning" furnishes the chief means of true

knowledge, though they admit other sources too. These four and Charvaka are called Haitukas. While Bouddha, and Pâsupata are known as Pâshandas.

Among the Haitukas, Charvaka relies on Prathyaksha; Vaiseshikas (followers of Kanada) say that Prathyaksha and Anumana (reason or inference) are the only two sources of human knowledge. The Naiyayikas, Akshapada, Goutama, and Udayana, postulate Prathyaksha, Anumana, Upamana, and Sabda (Perception, Inference, Analogy, and Testimony) as the sources. The Vaiseshikas think that though the Vedas may be trustworthy as the productions of God, spoken words of lesser persons have no value as such, and are incapable of producing correct knowledge. In the view of Kanada, they may be ancillary aids to inference, but independently, they are valueless.

Jaimini and Vedanta accord to the Vedas a peculiar position and importance. A certain writer puts it thus: "Haitukas took nature as their text, and reason as their guide; Jaimini took the Vedas as his text and Divine reason as revealed therein as his guide.

Nyaya and Vaiseshika systems arrive at God by syllogistic reasoning. Vedantins think that God is not knowable by inference, and that no deduction or induction is capable of establishing the existence of the Supreme Being. The Vedantins, therefore, postulate the Vedas first and establish God's existence on the strength of the Vedas. The Haitukas (excluding Charvaka and Kapila) postulate God first, and attribute the Vedas to his authorship.

To those who have a superficial acquaintance with the origin and evolution of the Hindu Darsanas, it may appear that Monism is the oldest creed in India, that Visishtadwaita, is next in birth, and that Dualism is the latest of all, a growth of comparatively modern times. This idea of sequence is based on the chronolology of Sri Sankara, Sri Ramanuja, and Sri Madhva, the three great apostles of the respective schools. But Dualism was known long before Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhva popularised it. Of the six ancient systems, Nyaya and Vaiseshika are allied, and so are Sankhya and Yoga. The latest pair of all, is Purva Meemamsa and Uttara Meemamsa. The first four are all dualistic. None of them preaches the unity of soul and matter.

The Sânkhya school is, strictly speaking, atheistic. It considers that Prakriti and Purusha account for everything. Purusha is the individual soul, of which there is an unlimited number. Primordial Prakriti is matter consisting of the 24 principles ranging from the three *gunas* down to the gross earth (solids). By the joinder of Purusha and Prakriti (spirit and matter), Samsâra is the result. Their divorce is the goal to be reached. Both are real entities that get on without any controlling Force or Power. The Universe according to this view, is a self-governing common-wealth. Each spirit-unit of this republic, is engaged in a ceaseless struggle to get free from the bit of matter to which it remains wedded. A well-developed memory enabling the Purusha to remember his original freedom, and a thorough knowledge gained by a bitter experience of the unworthiness of cosmic existence, enable the Purusha to betake himself to the right path. Life is nothing but gall and worm-

wood. This realized, the ardent struggle to get free ends in liberation.

The Sânkhya philosophy contains the most rational and authoritative exposition of evolution extant in the Indian literature. The analysis of the three *gunas* and their successive products is so thorough that it leaves nothing to be desired. All the later systems have adopted it, without question, and, to this day, it is acknowledged as the best exposition of the subject.

The Sankhya based his theories on 'Reason'. He laid stress on the wheel-and-the-clay-analogy, and deduced the world, and conceived the build of cosmos, on the same principle. But he apparently overlooked the fact that the *wheel and the clay* do not make up the pot. The Sankhya forgot the Potter who is the chief actor in the business.

The Yoga of Patanjali which is usually paired with Sankhya, remedied this defect by acknowledging a God. In all other respects, it followed the Sankhyan ideas. Patanjali worked out a code of physical discipline as the training school of spiritual education. In order to subdue desire, he advocated annihilation of flesh by drastic methods. He did not devote much thought to bring out a clear conception of the Supreme Being. He conceived God as a great Being, who lived far, far away, counting rosary beads, and looking on unconcerned with the struggles of humanity.

The next pair, Nyaya and Vaiseshika, were systems of bold reasoning. They are the founders of Indian logic. In subtleties, and clearness of psychological analysis, Akshapada and Kanada, the founders thereof, were matchless. They had a firm grip of the

laws of thought and their delicate working. Their treatises on inductive and deductive logic are masterly. The way in which the great writers of Nyaya, represented by Siromani, Gadadhara, and scores of Navadweep Pandits in modern times, deal with the fine shades of logical principles, has excited universal admiration.

These two schools admit God as the over-ruling Power. They say that God is the author of the Revelations. The Naiyayika admits an Eternal, Supreme, Personal God, as well as an eternal multitudinous number of souls. To these, he adds eternal, numerous, atoms of matter. The Vaiseshika admits these too, though he differs from his brother on some minor points.

The atomic theory of this school is not very intelligible. It does not correspond to the atomic theory of modern chemistry. Western science itself has not made up its mind about it. The Indian school sets an arbitary limit to the divisibility of particles. It calls a certain particle, of a certain minute size, a Paramânu or atom, and says 'Thus far you shall go and no farther'. It thinks that Paramânu is an ultimate unit which is physically incapable of further subdivision.

As for souls, these are not only infinite in number, but in infinite in size, individually. Theorists who fight shy of two infinites as a contradiction in terms and a scientific impossibility, may look well aghast, staggered by the Naiyayic position of infinite Infinities.

The tenets of Jaimini (Poorva Meemamsa) attach the highest importance to Sabda and the Vedas,

He refers to God as Sabda Brahma. Veda exists eternally in the mind of Brahman as Vak, the unspoken Divine Word. Veda is the spiritual incarnation of God. In Jaimini's view, Heaven is a gift of God's grace, too good to be won as of right, by any mortal. Jaimini conceives the cosmos as a symphony of rare beauty, perfect in every key and note. Sabda Brahma is the source of the harmony on which, the universe is planned, modulated, and built.

The Uttara Meemamsa comprises the Brahma Sootras of Srimat Bâdarâyanâ. Sri Sankara, Sri Ramanuja, and Sri Madhva, are the modern commentators of these aphorisms. The true import of the Sootras has been the subject of acrimonious controversy for many centuries.

Even before Sri Sankara's time, there were, obviously, commentaries that interpreted the Sootras in a dualistic sense. Sri Ramanuja is said to have perused a copy of Bodhyana Vritti in Srinagar of Cashmere, and based his own Sri Bhashya on that ancient commentary.

A modern thinker sums up Sri Madhva's Dualism thus :—

" Dualists believe in an extra-mundane Personal God, who is the repository of all blessed qualities, who is omnipotent, omniscient, and all loving, who creates the universe, not out of nothing, but out of the material nature which is eternal. God is the efficient cause of the universe, and nature is the material cause. They believe that the world existed in the past, and will exist in the future, from eternity. They say that nature is eternal, so are individual souls. Each

soul after remaining potentially in nature, for sometime, comes out of the causal state, at the beginning of a new cycle of creation or evolution or manifestation, in gross forms, one after another, going through the different grades of evolution, according to its desires and tendencies, until it reaches perfection. The human soul is like an infinitesimal particle of nature containing the Divine light of intelligence and Divine power, in an infinitely small degree, whose duty is to serve God through prayers and good deeds. God loves all and can be loved in return. Those who worship Him through unswerving devotion and unselfih love, obtain freedom from the dark side of nature, that is, from the bondage of ignorance, selfishness, suffering, misery, and all other imperfections, and after death, they live a life of bliss and perfection, in the presence of the Eternal Personal God. This is salvation according to the dualist in India." (Swami Abhedananda, Divine Heritage of Man, pages 128 to 132.)

The tenets of Sri Madhva on the points dealt with in Uttera Meemamsa are well summed up in a verse which is well known :

श्रीमन्मध्वमते हरिः परतरस्सत्यं जगत्तत्वतो भेदो जीवगणाहरेरनु-चरानीचोच्चभावं गताः॥ मुक्तिर्नैजसुखानुभूतिरमला भक्तिश्च तत्साधनं ह्यक्षादित्रितयं प्रमाणमखिलाम्नायैकवेद्यो हरिः

The meaning is " In Sri Madhva's theology, Hari is supreme, the world is real, separateness is true, the individual souls are infinitely graded as superior and inferior, and are dependent on God, liberation is self-realisation consisting in the enjoyment of such bliss as remained latent in the soul. Pure Bhakti (devotion) is the means to this end. Perception, inference, and

testimony, are the sources of knowledge (measures of proof) mundane and heavenly. Hari is knowable in the entirety of the Vedas and by Vedas alone."

From this resume, it is clear that Sri Madhva is Vaishnava, as Hari is the Supereme Being in his creed. He is a dualist who believes in the verity of God, Jeeva, and matter, existing eternally as distinct entities. The theistic Sankhya, Nyaya, Vaiseshika and Poorva Meemamsa, support Sri Madhva in this view. These philosophers are uncompromising dualists. Sri Sankara is the only great name that was opposed to this position. Hence, a very large part of Madhva writings is taken up with a minute refutation of Sri Sankara's Monism.

Sri Madhva was not satisfied with the Atheistic Sankhya. A world without a maker, was by him, deemed an absurdity. He repudiated the importance attached by the Haituka schools to "Inference." Sri Madhva maintained that perception and testimony were of higher value than Inference. No syllogism is possible without a reliance on either Perception or Revelation as an authoritative basis of the middle term. The basis of logic is observation and experience. If this be faulty, the logical reasoning based on it, results in a fallacy. As for God, no amount of human reasoning can lead to a deduction of God. Human reason is too feeble to demonstrate the existence of God. Revelation in the shape of a self-existent Veda is the only alternative, in his view.

Thus Sri Madhva refuses to be a Haituka because, he does not concede the highest value to Anumana, but place it in subordination to प्रत्यक्ष and शब्द. Unlike Char-

vaka, he admits inference to be proof, though of inferior importance.

Sri Madhva is thus neither a Haituka nor a Pâshanda, because unlike the former, he admits the veracity of Perception, Inference, and Testimony, without any prominence to the second of these, and because unlike the latter (Pashanda), he views Vedas as self-existent (uncreated by any personal author, Apaurusheya) and absolutely authoritative.

The vitality of the Vedanta schools of thought is due in a remarkable measure to this tenet about the Revealed Word. The Indian philosopher does not stake his system upon the historical idiosyncracies of any author, human or divine. Christianity, for instance, stands or falls by Christ as portrayed in the Gospels. If any historical flaw be detected in the personality or episodes connected with Christ, the creed itself is likely to suffer. So it is, with Islam, and with other creeds, whose destiny is intimately bound up with a Founder. The Indian philosophies promulgate truths as resting on Vedas. To them, the personality of the propounder and promulgator is not of such moment as the Vedas. In India, tenets and truths are all-important, and do not stand or fall by the personality of an author or law-giver.

While giving cordial support to the Haituka's view about the separateness of spirit and matter, and the infinite varieties of each, Sri Madhva differs from Nyaya in three important respects at least: (1) with him, the Jeeva is of atomic minuteness, and not of infinite expansiveness. God is the Being that is infinitely expanded, that is Omnipresent. The individual soul is a poor limited being confined to a

minute fraction of space. (2) Sri Madhva holds that there is no particle of matter that is incapable of division *ad infinitum*. 'It may be, that no human hand may possess the necessary skill and the necessary apparatus or implement to effect divisions beyond a certain stage, but this does not matter. The particle is still capable of parts and liable to be divided. Hence, the atomic theory of Akshapâda and Kanâda is arbitrary and illogical. It is a pure dogma for which no authority can be cited in Reason or Revelation. (3) Nor is there any ground for the supposition that pleasure is only a negation, absence, or abolition, of pain. Moksha is according to Sri Madhva, of a dual nature. There is the absence of pain as well as the enjoyment of positive happiness.

The 'Haitukas' made the grand mistake of supposing that the Jeeva can work out his salvation by unaided struggles. They believed in Karmic accumulations and believed in the possibility of repaying every debt of Karma to the very last pie. Sri Madhva adopts the loftly theory of Bhakti, and relies on Bhakti as the saviour of man. According to him, devotion, is the only high-way. God's grace obtained by Aparoksha, God-vision, is the only solvent for Karmic accumulations. In this respect, viz., of advocating Bhakti and divine Grace as the saviour of mankind, Sri Madhva agrees with Jaimini prominently.

The school of Sri Madhva has been summed up by one writer of note as a philosophy of 'relations' and 'degrees.' We believe in God and the Jeeva being eternally and indissolubly related to each other. God is an Absolute, but chooses to be in relation. He is a Bimba, and all Jeevas are his reflections,

Pratibimbas. This relation never dies, either before or after liberation and redemption.

The duality implied in thought as subject and object, endures for ever. The merger of the two is inconceivable, consistently with the laws of thought. The dualism of subject and object constitutes the law and the frame-work of thought. It is the form which every thought *must* take. In trying to identify subject and object, we annihilate thought itself. The world is framed upon this limitation, and where is the possibility of outsoaring this vital limitation? Hence the only union that is possible is in the subordination of the human will in the Divine will, in the acknowledgment of the eternal dependence of the Jeeva on God, in the realisation of this relation, and seeking redemption by binding ourselves with God in immortal love (Bhakti).

The other key-note of Sri Madhva's creed relates to the degrees of worth and rank into which the Jeevas are divided. The cosmos consists of infinite varieties of souls and things. Their capacities are divergent, and their functions are unlike. Evolution implies variety and gradation. It is God's plan of work in the animate, as well as the inanimate, kingdom. Souls are accordingly good, bad, and indifferent. *Inter se*, they attract some souls and repel others. Their attraction, repulsion, and apathy, towards God, determines their status, worth, and destiny. Even material objects are thus resolvable into Satwic, Rajasic, and Tamasic.

Modern science speaks of electrons (ultimate units of matter, so far known) having spontaneity as an inalienable birth-right, together with innate tendencies of attraction and repulsion. A scientist

remarks, "In the chemical relation of the various elements towards each other, they manifest every shade of inclination, from complete indifference to the fiercest passion."

Every one of the positions adverted to in the Sanskrit verse quoted above, is the theme of voluminous dissertations in our sacred writings. I have referred to the barest outline of the thoughts, as it is not practicable to do more.

Impartial scholars of the Vedanta have, some of them, been forced to admit that the Brahma Sootras and the Bhagavat Geeta, read without bias, do not support the Adwaita doctrine. Two quotations must suffice to indicate the general drift of this view.

In the course of a very closely reasoned introduction to the translation of Sankara Bhashya, Dr. Thibaut, the well-known oriental scholar, sums up his conclusions thus: "I must give it as my opinion that they (the Sootras) do not set forth the distinction of a higher and a lower knowledge of Brahman, that they do not acknowledge the distinction of Brahman and Iswara in Sankara's sense, that they do not hold the doctrine of the unreality of the world, and that they do not, with Sankara, proclaim the identity of the individual and the highest Self."

Anent the philosophy of the Bhagavat Geeta, Mr. L.D. Barnet summarises it thus in the Oriental Review of London in a recent article: "At the summit of all existence is an absolute spirit, variously called, Paramatman, Purushottama, Vasudeva, Iswara, Narayana, Govinda, Hari, or Vishnu. But though a Being inconceivable and above the three moods, He is not the blank, attributeless, unqualified One of the Vedanta (Adwaita). On the other hand, in Him

are united all conceivable good qualities raised to infinity: all goodness, knowledge, and blessedness, that are and may be, abide in an immeasurable degree in Him. He is the soul, the witness, the inward ruler, of the universe. All the universe is *real*, for it is inspired throughout by this blessed soul. The universe comprises two real categories, one matter, and infinitely many souls; Cosmically, they are real. God has willed the world, wills it ever, and His Grace is to be found everywhere, by them that seek it, for deliverance from the cycle of birth. It may be found through knowledge or through austerities,--knowledge like the Sankhya teaching the eternal difference of soul and matter, and austerity like the Yoga quickening enlightenment by closing the eye of the flesh; —but in all seekings, there must rule the spirit of the loving devotion (Bhakti), else knowledge and austerity will seldom avail."

This writer sums up the teachings of the Bhagavat Geeta as *he* reads it. He does not profess to give Sri Madhva's or anybody's summary. The reader will see how remarkably well it coincides with Sri Madhva's interpretation of true Vedanta.

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CHAPTER VI.

A BROAD VIEW OF MAYA VADA.

It is impossible to think of any Teacher in India who has been more admired or more criticised than Sri Sankara. On the one hand, his Maya Vada has evoked the highest praise that language can express, and provoked likewise, on the other hand, the bitterest possible criticism.

Of late, the tendency has been more to admire than to depreciate this philosophy. A vast literature is growing over the subject, presenting Sri Sankara's Monism in various aspects, explaining, elucidating, and distinguishing, the super-subtle shades of thought, with all the ingenuity of which the Indian philosophical brain is capable. It is almost coming to be thought that not to admire Sri Sankara is to argue oneself unphilosophic and ignorant. In this state of things, it should be wise on my part not to attempt anything like a discussion of such a highly applauded school of thought. But in justice to Sri Madhva, I feel bound to refer to the leading ideas of Mâyâ Vâdâ, however cursorily it may be, because this is the only school that the Master concentrated all his efforts to overthrow.

It is not easy to set down even the cardinal ideas of the school in an exhaustive manner, or condense in a short compass all that could be said pro and con. Adwaitism is thus set forth in the Advanced Text Book of Sanatana Dharma (Benares). "The Adwaita Vedanta is summed up in the words तत्वमासि "Thou art That." Brahman is *Nirguna*, without

attributes, and is Real; all else is unreal. Jivatma and Paramatma are the same, there is no difference. The idea of difference arises from *Avidya*, Nescience, and when the Atma transcends Nescience, it knows its own nature and is free. The universe springs from Brahman as hairs from a man's head; it is the work of Maya. Cause and effect are one and the same (**कार्यकारणाभेदः**) not two different things, as an aggregate of threads is cloth, and there is no cloth apart from the threads that run lengthways and crossways. The unreality of the Universe having Reality, as it were, behind it, has a kind of reality, like a shadow which could not exist without a substance, and this justifies and makes necessary, activity of all kinds. Hence also there is an **अपराविद्या** the knowledge of the phenomenal as well as **पराविद्या** the knowledge of the Noumenon. Having established the fundamental truth of Unity, the Vedanta explains the conditions which surround the Atma enveloped in Avidya, the Upadhi which makes its illusory separateness, their grouping as Sthoola, Sookshma, and Karana Sariras and the States of consciousness belonging to these. While the Atma identifies itself with the Upadhis, it is bound; when it knows itself as itself, it is free. For those who are not yet ready for this effort after self-knowledge, ritual is not only desirable but necessary; but for those who have reached the point where only the Atma attracts, Gnanam is enough, and Brahman is the goal."

The leading ideas of Mâyâ Vâdâ lay stress on the points:

i. that Brahman is *Nirguna*, without attributes.

ii. that Brahman and the Universe of Spirit and Matter are identical.

iii that Avidya or Nescience accounts for the transformation, or illusory appearance, of the world.

POINT I.— NIRGUNA.

Adwaita lays down that Brahman is attributeless. No doubt the expression निर्गुण does occur in Vedantic scriptures in respect to Brahman. Dualists maintain that Brahman is *Nirguna* only in the sense that He is uncontaminated by the Gunas of Prakriti, and that He is absolutely Non-Material in essence. The reference to Brahman in the Vedic literature as "beyond speech and thought" means only, according to Dualists, that human thought cannot *fully* grasp Him and that no human word as understood by man is good enough to describe God adequately. Adwaitins speak of a *Lower* and a *Higher* Brahman, formful and formless, changing and unchanging, finite and infinite, existent and *beyond existence.* Dualists contend that the distinction of Lower and Higher Brahman is baseless except perhaps in the sense that the so-called Lower Brahman is the four-faced *Brahma* who is the first born in the hierarchy of creation.

Sri Madhva says that a Brahman without attributes is tantamount to Soonya or Nihilism. If Brahman is निर्गुण, this epithet (Nirguna) is itself a kind of predication. It is a contradiction in terms for the Shastras to treat of Brahman in volumes upon volumes of descriptive language and enjoin a study of Brahman as the only road to Salvation, and then wind up by saying that Brahman is a mass (अखंड) and without attributes.

Adwaitins and Dwaitins are agreed in calling Brahman, *Sat, Chit, Ananda, (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.)* These terms, Adwaitins say, are not to be literally understood. Bliss, for instance, does not

mean that Brahman has any feeling of enjoyment. It means only the absence of the opposite, a negation of pain. In this manner, whatever is predicated of Brahman in the Shastras, is to be interpreted as meaning only the negation of the opposite, and no more. Brahman can be thought of, they say, only as negations. This is a canon of interpretation accepted by most of the exponents of the school. But the negation or negative attribute is itself a predication How is it then that Brahman is beyond predication, if connoted by a negative. He does not transcend predication even if 'Bliss' and other terms are thus interpreted in a tortuous manner as excluding only non-Bliss, etc.

To take up 'knowledge' which is mentioned as another ingredient of the Divine constitution, we are lost in a labyrinth of subtle explanations and distinctions. Brahman may be 'knowledge,' they say, but this knowledge implies neither subject nor object. Brahman has no consciousness as knower nor does it cognize any object, as known. Thus, though the term 'knowledge' is used, it is hard to see how Brahman can be a sentient Being or a knower in any sense. It has no properties appertaining to knowledge, no volition, no wish, nothing at all to make him animate and much less omniscient. The late Mr. T. Subba Rao, one of the most revered Theosophists and one of the most respected exponents of Adwaita Theosophy, says (at Page 93 of his 'writings') "There is only one permanent condition in the Universe, which is the state of *perfect unconsciousness*, bare *Chidakasam* in fact." Sri Madhva's retort is that Brahman is, in this view, an inert, nameless, and formless, mass, and that it is a misnomer to call *It* a Chaitanya or Intelligence.

To take up the last remaining idea of Sat or Reality, Adwaitins begin by classifying Reality into three kinds :

i. The reality of the Absolute.
ii. Phenomenal reality.
iii. Imaginative or conceptual reality.

The 2nd and 3rd kinds of reality may require some comment. The world of sense-experience comes under the 2nd class. It is liable to disappear and vanish only upon *self-realisation*. Short of that stage, it is real for all practical purposes. The origin of this is what is called Root-Avidya, and this is liable to be destroyed only by the Ultimate self-realisation, realization of perfect identity with the Absolute.

The 3rd class embraces what, in common parlance, is known as illusory perceptions. For example, the rope mistaken for the snake or the shell for a bit of silver. The misapprehension in these cases is due to an illusion technically called *Thoola Avidya*. The snake or silver, the result of this illusion, vanishes upon this error being found out by a true concept. The snake or silver is supposed to be real because it exists in concept until displaced by a correct understanding.

Having premised three kinds of reality, they consider that Brahman alone is truly real and that the visible universe, phenomenal and conceptual, (Vyâvahârika and Prâtibhâsika) is only of subordinate reality. They say further that Brahman is the cause of the Universe, both material and efficient. To account for the phenomenon of subordinate reality arising from the absolute reality, an Upadhi (conditioning cause) is supposed to act as a

medium. This is termed *Maya* or *Avidya* and this, it is supposed, projects or distils the Absolute into Relation. It is Nescience or Illusion that brings about the visible, and the visual or ideal, universe.

The world of individual souls is said to be the result of Maya operating like a mirror, and producing reflected images. It is a pecularity of mirrors that they are partial to the reflected image and affect the latter alone, not possessing any capacity to affect or influence the original. Thus Maya or Avidya produces no change in the Absolute, but produces myriads of individual souls. So long as the influence of Avidya lasts, the individual soul suffers from plural perceptions and is lost in Samsara. When the Avidya disappears, he is merged in the Absolute.

Among Monists, there seem to be two schools, the difference between them being somewhat important. One section says that *Brahman plus Avidya* is the cause of the universe, in the sense that clay is the cause of the jar. Creation is thus a process of transformation. This school is known as Brahma Parinamavada. The summary quoted above from the advanced text-book refers to this theory, by adverting to illustrations such as hair issuing from a man's head and threads woven into a cloth being one with the cloth itself. The other section of Monists say that the world is only an *appearance*, that Brahman is only the background of an illusion like the rope or the shell which is misapprehended to be a snake or a bit of silver, that the medium Maya or Avidya brings about this mirage-like panorama. This school is known as *Vivarta Vada*.

We strongly contest the view that Reality admits of classifications such as has been adverted to by

Adwaitins as the groundwork of their system. The snake-in-the-rope is an utter figment of a deluded perception. It has no reality about it. It is a gross twisting of language to make out that such things are real. The so-called phenomenal reality which is predicated of the Universe is no reality at all. It is *assumed* that self-realisation has the magic of destroying the Universe. Upon such an assumed hypothesis, provision is made for a *reality* effaced by nothing short of self-realization. This is purely a conventional reality. It looks more like the symbols of a cypher or the code-words of a telegraph settled on a symbological understanding. Anybody may please himself by calling *light* by the word *gloom* or vice versa. It serves no purpose but to please his fancy. Sri Madhva says that a thing is either real or unreal, and that there is no third or intermediate alternative at all. He contends that no gradations of reality or unreality are admissible.

POINT II.—GOD AND UNIVERSE IDENTICAL.

Adwaita Vedanta builds up a huge edifice of speculation on the text तत्वमसि "Thou art That" occurring in Chandogya Upanishad. It has become famous in Vedantic literature as the one text around which the controversy has raged the fiercest. Sri Sankara says that the text declares the identity of God and man. Sri Madhva says that it simply means that man is after the image of his Maker, that what is declared is not identity but similarity. The language of the text also admits of the construction अतत्वमसि so that the meaning may be 'Thou art not That.' The context fits in with this version too. How can the Vedic scripture declare all but Brahman to be unreal? A Sruti declaring

all but Brahman to be unreal thereby declares itself to be unreal and unacceptable. A revelation that is unreal cannot be a source of knowledge and much less convincing. Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhva maintain that an interpretation which cuts the ground from under the feet, by being suicidal in character, cannot be sound and valid. They say that if all else be unreal, Monism has no legs to stand upon, for, *ex hypothesi*, there is no Monist, no Monism, no proofs, no Shastra, no study and no perceptions singular or plural, no Upadhi or Maya or Avidya, nothing at all, as the basis of the system, all these being illusory.

In the Parinama Vada, which inculcates the theory that the world issues out of Brahman as hair does from a living body, or as a pot does out of clay, it is difficult to follow the argument about the unreality of the effect. Mr. Worseley points out this, in his Concepts of Monism, as a lesion. He puts it thus, saying, that cause and effect being qualitatively identical, if Brahman be the material cause, the Universe being its effect must be real too.

POINT III—MAYA OR AVIDYA.

The great question for solution is, how is it that the pure should *become* or *seem* impure? Why should the Unbound *become* or *seem* bound? Adwaita refers us to Maya as the explanation of this problem. From a careful perusal of the Sanskrit treatises, we learn Maya or Avidya to mean a kind of ignorance, false knowledge, some kind of illusion or delusion. They describe it as *a tangible something*, not a mere negation or absence of knowledge. They call it भावरूप. Maya or Avidya being the sheet-anchor of Monism, it is necessary to study it somewhat closely. In speaking of its composition and essence, Maya or Avidya is said to be a *beginningless something, a positive entity.*

The question occurs at once, is this something which is responsible for all phenomena, real or unreal? If the former, Monism vanishes. Adwaitins say that Avidya is on the same footing of mixed reality and unreality, *Anirvâchya* as the Universe itself, which is a product thereof. Herein is a crux. Phenomenal reality is due to a single cause, viz., that it is brought on by Avidya. If Avidya itself is the result of Avidya, we are landed in a vicious circle or a *regress us in infinitum.*

Secondly, if Avidya is a tangible something, how is it liable to be destroyed by knowledge or self-realisation. Ignorance as commonly understood is *absence* of knowledge. So the idea that knowledge dispels ignorance is conceivable, ignorance disappearing, knowledge steps in. But if both are tangible entities, one cannot be destroyed by the other unless they co-exist in time and space. How then is this peculiarly-conceived, tangible, Avidya, removed by knowledge, without co-existing with it in time and space.

Up to a certain point, Monism yields explanations. It says plural perception accounts for individuality. But the vital questions are, why should the Infinite appear in a finite garb? Why should the Unbound be bound or appear bound? Why should *Maya or Avidya* act thus? Why should the individual soul which is Brahman in essence be of limited understanding and be capable of plural perception? These and other kindred questions are not answerable. Is Brahman liable to change or not? If not, how is it the material and effecient cause of the Universe?

They say that Maya is inscrutable. They say that not only Maya but the phenomenal world too is inscrut-

able, neither real nor unreal, *Anirvachaniya.* This is, as Mr. J. V. Kirtikar himself puts it, no explanation, but a confession of the difficulty. This gentleman says as to Sri Sankara's position: "The world is changeable. It is a manifestation upon an unchangeable. Admitting the phenomenal reality as a part of experience, Sankara *assumes* that Brahman with its inscrutable Maya is both the material and efficient cause of the Universe." The italics are Mr. J. V. Kirtikar's, not mine.

If the Parinamavada be an assumption as conceded in the above extract, is *Vivarta* better? In the theory that the *appearance* of the world as an independent entity is illusory, merely a dream, who is the dreamer, and why does he dream? If it is replied that the individual soul is the dreamer, how is it that he is said to be the *effect* of the dream, that is to say, that there is no individual soul before the dream. The vicious circle is this, that the individual soul exists, before he misapprehends and dreams, operated on by illusion, and that the individual soul comes into being only afterwards and as the effect and result of illusion.

In the mistake of the rope for a snake, there are the following elements, (1) misconceiver; (2) snake as a living entity in the world, unlike the horn of a hare, (3) resemblance between rope and the snake, such as length, coil, colour. etc.

If Brahman is to be misconceived as man or matter, it implies that man or matter is an existing entity of the world, like the snake in the illustration, and connot be a mere fiction. There must be, besides some illusioning cause such as resemblance to make the misconceiver imagine like this. It is impossible to

think of such a cause, to make him conceive of Brahman as man or matter.

On comparing the leading ideas emphasized by the Sanskrit writings of Adwaitic teachers, with those laid stress on by modern exponents of Adwaita, the reader will be struck by a remarkable deflection and divergence of thought. It seems to me that Monism presented by Swami Vivekananda, Mrs. Beasant, and other great persons of note, is not the Monism propounded and inculcated by Sri Sankara, Bhaskara, and the authors of Adwaita Sidhi and Brahmanandiya. The modern tendency has been to round off angularities by attempting original interpretations of the basic tenets.

Sri Sankara, for example, lays the utmost emphasis (1) on the *attributelessness of Brahman*, (2) on the *Jagan Mithyathwam*, unreality of the world (3) on the beginningless, positive, Avidya as the true creator of cosmos. Let us hear Swami Vivekananda for a moment, on these three points.

POINT I—NIRGUNA.

The Swami says that the term 'unknowable' in respect to Brahman means only that He is more than knowable. He says P. 276 (speeches and writings) "God is neither known nor knowable in this sense. It is something still higher than known; that is what is meant by God being unknown and unknowable, not in the sense in which some people say some questions are unknowable and unknown. It is more than known. The chair is known; it is a certain degree of that knowledge, but God is intensely more than that, etc., etc." This refinement of the Swami reduces Adwaita to the

view of the Dualists that God is the Being that cannot be *fully* known by any human mind or attributes.

POINT II—JAGAN MITHYA.

Sri Sankara and his orthodox followers are never tired of using the rope-in-the-snake and silver-in-the-mother-of-pearl as illustrations to explain their idea of Jagan Mithya. From this illustration, they deduce that Brahman alone is true and real. The Swami understands *Jagan Mithya* to mean that there is but One Absolute Existence; *Vide* page 188. "This world has no existence, *Jagan Mithya.* What is meant thereby? That it has no existence absolute. It has not that unchangeable, immoveable, infinite, existence." This again is the position of Dualists. We say, most emphatically, that God is the only Absolute, and that everything else exsists in relation to Him as His reflected images, but none the less true. God alone is eternal, constant, unchangeable, and all else is fleeting, transient, dependent. The Swami does not seem to be far from this position. At page 388, the Swami says "As humanity, I am one with you and as Mr. so and so, I am different from you. As a man, you are separate from a woman, as a human being, you are one with the woman. As a man, you are separate from the animal, but as a living being, man, the woman, the animal, the plant are all one, and as *existence* you are one with the whole universe. That existence is God, the ultimate unity in this universe." Shades of Sri Sankara! Is this the sense in which all are one according to Adwaita philosophy? The Dualists do not hesitate for a moment to admit that as '*sat*' *or existence* there is oneness, i.e., similarity between God and the Jeeva. If this be the true import of *oneness*, the Dualists have no grounds for disagreement at

all. It is an insult to the common-sense of Sri Ramanuja, Sri Madhva, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Vallabha that they could not understand the words of Sri Sankara, but attacked a mere phantom of straw created by their own imagination.

POINT III—AVIDYA OR MAYA.

Swami Vivekananda expounds *Maya* in his own original manner. He virtually dissociates all notions of delusion from the term. He takes it broadly to mean the riddles of cosmic existence. He refers to the thousand and one difficulties and problems of life and death, and calls the state of things 'Maya.' He refers to the contradiction between truths and beliefs, between professions and practice, between convictions and pursuits, and calls them all Maya. He says Maya is not a theory but is a Tantalus' Hell. He says that man may be said to know and not to know at the same time, that he stands between ignorance and knowledge, in a mystic twilight, in the mixture of truth and falsehood, half awake and half asleep, as in a haze, and this, he says, is Maya. At page 206, he winds up by saying "This is what is called *Maya*, this *Nature*, this *Universe.*"

Dualists understand 'Maya' to mean Lakshmi, Prakriti, nature, wonder, delusion, etc. All these are dictionary interpretations. They understand the term mostly as equivalent to Nature in the context of creation spoken of in the Shastras. The Swami Vivekananda's view approximates to the same.

Whereas Sri Sankara makes Maya a positive something, Messrs. Worseley and J. V. Kirtikar describe Nescience as a *failure to perceive*. This

negative description is altogether opposed to volumes of Adwaitic literature on the subject.

Adverting to the lesion of a qualitative identity between the Brahman and the Universe, and to the inference of Reality Worsely points out thereon, J.V. Kirtikar observes that the Universe, according to Adwaita, is indeed real, in a sense, and that Worsely made the mistake of confounding Adwaita with *Soonya Vada*. On the other hand, Mr. T. Subba Rao laboured hard, in a series of articles in the Theosophist, to demonstrate the position that Brahman in the Adwaitic view is no other than the "Void" of the ancients. He says (at page 111 of his writings) " In our opinion, the something, or rather, the *nothing* called 'Spirit' has by itself no form or forms in either progressive or stationary states of development............ Can a '*void*' be annihilated? and what is pure, absolute, spirit but the void of the ancient Greek Philosophers? Well, says Lucretius, there can be no third thing besides body and void, for, if it be to the smallest extent tangible, it is body; if not, it is "void".

Thus, while Mr. Kirtikar repudiates the theory of 'Void', Mr. T. Subba Rao who was in his day regarded as a great authority on Monism, tried hard to make out Adwaita to be identical with the Greek school of 'void'. Sri Madhva's view is that Adwaita is virtually Soonya Vada (*Vide* his monograph Tatwodyota). He quotes numerous passages of Adwaita which declare the world to be a non-entity and make out Brahman to be no other than the 'void' of the Soonya school.

Lala Baijnath, Chief Justice of Indore, once spoke as follows about the true philosophy of the Upanishads

(Vide pages 63, 64, Vol I. Ninth International Congress of Orientalists, London, 1892). "The later Vedantic philosophers of India, including Sankaracharya have however pressed these teachings to mean that the world is *mâya*, a baseless illusion, to be destroyed by knowledge. This is, however, not the true philosophy of the Upanishads. In none of them except the Swetaswatara Upanishad does the word *Maya*, which supports the illusion theory, occur, and even in the Swetaswatara the word Maya is used synonymously with Prakriti, and differentiated matter. "Know the Maya to be Prakriti, and the Lord of Maya to be Maheswara! this whole world is pervaded by power which are his parts." (Swet. Up. IV 10). To say that the objects of the world are as unreal, and have as intangible an existence, as those of dreams, the great doctrine preached by Sankaracharya and his followers, or that the world does not really exist, is therefore wrong. The Upanishads do not support a *Parinama Vada.* The process of manifestation of the Universe is, according to them, a real not an illusory, process. When they say that all name and form are merely nominal, that earth in jars, pots, etc., or gold in every ornament is only true, they mean not that pots or ornaments do not exist, but that they do not exist apart from the earth or gold. The same is true of Brahman. The world does not exist in its present from and it does not exist apart from Brahman. It is not an erroneous appearance, as that of a rope mistaken for a snake, but it has no individual or separate existence. This is perhaps the great error into which later Vedantins have fallen and which has been the cause of their teachings not guiding popular religion. In fact, the

and Sootra of Vyasa which is "that Brahman is that from which the origin, subsistence, and dissolution of this world proceeded", does not at all support the illusion theory. The Sootra proves that the world owes its existence and subsistence to God; that it dissolves into Him. It also proves that the world differentiated by names and forms, containing many agents and enjoyers, the abode of the fruit of actions, these fruits having definite times, places, and causes, and the nature of whose arrangement cannot be conceived by the mind, cannot proceed from any but a Lord possessing the above qualities."

The basic religious ideas are mostly common to Dwaita and Adwaita, up to the limits of what the latter call the lower Brahman. Both the schools accept the principles of evolution in their outline and most of the details. The law of Karma which furnishes the motive force propelling the wheel of Samsara, is defined and understood by both, more or less, in the same manner. There is a great deal of similarity in practices and beliefs in the mundane sphere and in the worship of spirits and Gods. But at the topmost point, the Adwaitins place a *something* they will not define. At this point, they say that religion merges into philosophy. They bridge the gulf between religion and philosophy by what is called *Maya.* In framing their notions about Maya and the Absolute, they launch upon daring speculation. Herein imagination soars to great heights and gets lost in rarefied subtleties and self-contradictions, and violent tortures of scriptural texts occur frequently. To crown all, they perform the wondrous feat

of making the extremes, viz., God and Man, meet and merge, not in union, but in unity. This is a somersault of the whole fabric. Reason, common-sense, and the religious instinct, rebel against a theory that seems to undermine the foundations of religion and ethics. Sri Madhva strongly opposes this conclusion of the Adwaitins and the process of reasoning based on Maya by which this conclusion is reached.

CHAPTER VII.

ACHIT.

Jeeva, the individual soul, is the principle of intelligence that co-exists with the Supreme Being, but is thoroughly and absolutely dependent on Him. Another thing that is likewise dependent on the Lord is Achit or Jada, the non-intelligent. Sri Madhva analyses and devides Achit things into three classes: (1) Those that are eternal, Nityas, (2) those that are eternal in one sense, and not so, in another sense, Nityâ-Nityas, (3) those that are transient, Anityâs, i. e., having both birth and death. Among eternal things, Sri Madhva counts Vedas, Varnas, and Avyakritâkâsa. The eternality of the Vedas seems common ground for all Vedantins. Swami Vivekananda explains this by saying that Vedas are no books but "the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws, discovered by different persons, at different times, such discoverers being Rishis." He observes further (page 370) "in and through the Vedas, the whole creation has come. All that is called knowledge is in the Vedas. Every word is sacred and eternal, eternal as the created man, without beginning and without end. As it were, the whole of the creator's mind is in the book." The permutation and combination of Varnas gives rise to words. The Varnas are eternal while words and sentences are liable to be created. Avyakritakasa is space. It too is eternal, and is co-extensive with the infinite. This is not to be confounded with Bhoota Akasa or Ether, for, the latter is a created thing and ranks among the transient

objects of Brahmanda. Among the varieties of the second class,. Nitya-Nityas, we are referred to (1) Time (2) Purânas, (3) and Prakriti. Time is eternal in its primal from, but its sub-divisons in the shape of seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, etc., are transitory and evanescent. Time is therefore eternal like a flowing river, whose running stream is continually emptying the waters in the ocean, while it is receiving an unceasing supply, all the time, from above. Sri Madhva holds that space and time are objects of perception to Sâkshi, the cognizing organ of the soul. According to him, these are not the creations of the mind, as some western Philosophers fancy. It is Kant's view that mind is the source of time and space conceptions, and that time and space are therefore unreal. Whether traced to the mind or to the soul it is difficult to follow the reason about their *unreality.* Dr. Martineau observes "to trace the origin of these ideas to the very make of our minds, so far from giving just reason to suppose them illusory, affords the strongest presumption that they reflect the reality of things. Kant, on the other hand, having traced up our ideas of space and time to their spring in our own mental constitution, claims to have shown that "mind makes nature", that nature is purely an ideal fiction of our thought, in vivid antithesis to another school of philosophy according to which, nature makes mind, i. e., our minds are the mere camera on which the world of reality throws its various and vivid images." While agreeing, in the main, that real external objects throw images on the mental camera, Sri Madhva goes a step further and holds that the conceptions of time and space are so primary that it is Sâkshi, the organ

of the soul, on which the images of time and space are thrown, and that their reality is thus utterly above suspicion or doubt.

By the term Purana, every production in the field of literature, whatever the language may be, is meant. It is Nityâ-Nitya, because it has birth by reason of being a production, and after it is born, abides for ever imprinted in Akâsa. Prakriti too is Nityâ-Nitya, for it is eternal in its causal, primordial, root-form, and transient (Anitya) in the shape of effects or manifestations. By the term Prakriti, we understand all that is known as matter and force, existing in any condition of grossness or fineness, whether atomic or superatomic, whether solid, liquid, gaseous, or etheric, and whether physical or mental. It covers the whole range of physiology, psychology and the natural sciences. It is the substance, of which the macrocosm and microcosm of the Universe are builded, including the body of every Deva, Rishi, Pitri, Gandharva, and the rest of the divine hosts. It is not possible to conceive of any unreleased soul, from the Four-faced Brahma down to an atom of dust, without thinking of Prakriti as the material of that soul's encasement, as the mortal coil or coils constituting its prison-house. Its name imports all this, that no creation is possible without it, because it is the material cause of the Universe, while God is the operating, efficient, cause thereof. Lakshimî is the presiding deity of Prakriti. She is the consort of God in the work of creation. She is the receptacle of the Lord's will, to conjoin souls with body and carry on the work of creation. She is the only Being who is utterly untouched by the sensation of pain, दुःखास्पृष्टा, free from flaws, and co-extensive with the Lord as to Omnipresence.

Jada Prakriti is eternal like the Goddess herself. Our books have a very firm grasp of the truth that matter and energy are indestructible. They realised well that it is impossible to add a foot-pound of energy to, or take away a single atom of matter from, the eternal stock. It is Christian theology that does not seem to recognise this truth. Cardinal Newman observes "I mean by the Supreme Being, one who is simply self-dependent and the only Being who is such. I mean *that he created all things out of nothing,* and could destroy them as easily as he made them, and that, in consequence, he is separate from them by an abyss, and incommunicable in all His attributes." It is one thing to say that God is so powerful as to be able to make and unmake anything, and quite another to say that he does make anything out of nothing It is His will that he chooses to allow Jeevas, Time, Space, and other things, to be eternal. It is His law that the sum total of material particles and of energy shall continue a constant quantity. There may be evolution or involution, expansion or contraction, but no addition or annihilation.

According to our Acharya, Prakriti is the ocean which, being tossed up by the Supreme Being, displays ripples, waves, and foams. It is Prakriti that undergoes agitation and exhibits storm and calm. The ripples, waves, and foams, now rising mountains-high on the crest of the waters, now breaking down into the hollows and disappearing from view, are manifestations taking birth and suffering decay or death. If one thing characterises Prakriti more than another, it is the *liability to change* of moods, conditions, and forms. It is Prakriti out of which fetters are forged for the bondage of Jeevas. Being non-

intelligence by nature, it furnishes the Upâdana, material causes, for building bodies in the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms, as well as of beings above men. Its characteristic is to hinder light, to screen off knowledge, to lead the Jeeva away from the self and God.

Avidya, the beginningless Nescience, that envelopes the Jeeva, is a form of Prakriti. There are two kinds of this Avidya, that act as blinds to obstruct the soul's true knowledge. One is known as *Jeevachâdika* Avidya, the Nescience that sits as a nightmare on the individual soul, preventing it from unfolding itself and obtaining self-realisation by the budding and blossoming of its own spiritual capacities and enjoyments. This Avidya crushes the freedom of the soul and prevents it from enjoying itself, the bliss and knowledge that is its own essence. The other form of Avidya is known as *Paramâchâdika*. It screens off the Supreme Being from the Jeeva's view. It is the cataract hanging in front of the soul's eye to prevent the knowledge of God from reaching the soul. Sri Madhva holds that both these Avidyas have presiding deities of a Satanic nature, who are sent to Hell when God chooses to save the Jeeva by removing the blinds. He holds further that these Avidyas are not mere negations of knowledge, but positive principles built of the substance of Prakriti. Ramanujas do not seem to admit a positive Nescience. Sânkarites believe in a positive Avidya. But there is a vital difference in the conception between the Mâdhva and Sânkara schools. Sri Sankara's description of Avidya as to its function and as to how it disappears, reduces it virtually into a negative principle. According to Sri Sankara, it is not

God whose grace removes the partition. Avidya savours of the nature of mere ignorance and vanishes at the touch of Brahma-knowledge. But strangely enough, he does not admit that knowledge and Nescience co-exist in time, so as to render it possible for the one to kill the other, positive beings as they are both admitted to be.

We may proceed to consider briefly some other well-known forms of Jada Prakiti—the forms that go to build up the macrocosm and microcosms of Brahmânda. By macrocosm we take the fourteen worlds that are said to constitute the egg of the Universe, including the millions of solar systems of which the cosmos consists. The microcosm is the internal man built on the same plan and principle as the macrocosm, for, nature builds everything on a uniform plan and revels in unity underlying diversity throughout.

Before we get from the unmanifest Prakriti to well-developed forms of created objects, it is not unnatural that there should be a sort of transition-stage in which we find certain things which bear the hall-mark of creation but imperfectly. Sri Madhva calls these by the name of Asamsrishtânitya, *i.e.*, imperfectly-created things. These objects are the 24 principles forming the basic components of all future creation. They are Mahat, Ahankâra, Budhi, Manas, the ten sense-organs (to be enumerated below) the five sense-objects, (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch) and the five great elements, (ether, air, fire, water, and earth).

These 24 principles represent the transition, because these exist in the primordial Prakriti in subtle forms as such before their evolution. Being derived

directly from their own subtle forms without the interposition of other intermediate forms, they are unlike other created things, which also in a sense, exist in Prakriti latently.

These 24 principles are the products of Prakriti subsisting in its three-fold division of forces known as Satva, Rajas, and Tamas. These three gunas (forces or qualities) are the first sprouts branching off from the unmanifest Prakriti. Sri, Bhoo, and Durga are the three forms of the Goddess Lakshmi that preside over the three gunas respectively. It is not easy to convey a clear idea of the three gunas by apt English equivalents. Rajas is often rendered into *repulsion*, Tamas into *attraction*, and Satwa as the balance between these two forces. Hence Tâmasic objects have a tendency to cohere, Râjasic ones to fly off, and the Sâtwic force to hold the balance even. Satwa is usually identified with illumination, Rajas with activity, and Tamas with darkness, ignorance, obstruction, laziness, inertia. It is important to remember how powerful and how vast is the mastery of the three gunas over Jeevas. Sri Krishna declares in Geeta (XVIII—40) that there is no class of Jeevas on earth and even in Heaven among the gods, that is left unassailed by these three qualities born of Prakriti.

The work of creation proceeds from the preponderance of Rajas, activity; the work of dissolution, when Tamas preponderates, and that of preservation and sustenance, by the predominance of Satwa which maintains an equilibrium. In the main, the tendency of Satwa is to illume the path, lead the Jeeva upward and Heavenward, and enable him to compass his own salvation. The tendency of Rajas is to make him rise and sink, and keep him

rolling about in Samsâra, give him petty joys and griefs, and tantalize him midway between Heaven and Hell. The tendency of Tâmasa is said to be to pull the Jeeva down and dig his grave for him in Hell. This three-fold division colours our will, colours all our knowledge and emotions, and affects our speech and action. Whoever is anxious to guard himself from spiritual pitfalls, must keep a sharp look-out, to avoid the Râjasic and Tâmasic in everything, in the food he swallows, in the pleasures he seeks, in the pursuits he engages in, in the duties he performs, in the attitudes of his mind, and in the spirit in which he wills, thinks, and acts.

As already observed, the three gunas of disturbed equipoise, give rise to the 24 principles enumerated above. Of them, Mahat is the first form. It is the finest conceivable form of matter and energy. The body of the Four-faced Brahma is said to be composed of this principle "Mahat" alone. As the effect is bound to possess the attributes of this cause, Mahat too partakes of the colouring of gunas. But the most preponderating guna therein is Satwa, while the two others are so feeble as to be negligible. Mahat is sometimes translated into 'Intellect' and sometimes as the 'Universal consciousness.' The struggle is to convey the idea of something extremely subtle and fine, something so vast as to permeate the egg of the universe—something which sits as a film that is so feeble as to be virtually non-existent as a resisting medium. Hence it is, that the Four-faced Brahma is so vast in knowledge. Ahamkâra is the next form born of Mahat. This is a little more dense, though still very subtle. This constitutes the body of Rudra. Brahma the Four-faced

is the parent of Rudra, for it is Brahma's body, the Mahat, that furnishes the material of Ahamkâra (the body of Rudra). Ahamkâra is often translated into the *individualizing principle*—the cause of "I-ness" in consciousness. It is doubtful if this be accurate.

Budhi is the discriminative faculty born of Ahamkâra.

Manas is the mind, born of Ahamkâra. Ahamkâra is subdivided into (1) Vaikarika, (2) Taijasa (3) and Tamasa classes. From Vaikarika Ahamkara, Manas (lower) and the bodies of the deities presiding over the sense-organs are created. From Taijasa, the ten sense-organs are born. These ten are:—the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and skin, constituting the organs of knowledge (Gnanendriyas), together with hands, feet, mouth (speech), excretory and generative organs, known as (Karmendriyas) organs of action. From Tâmasa Ahamkâra, are born the five sense-objects, viz., sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch, and the five great elements, ether, air, fire, water, and earth. Among these *inter se* the following is the order of generation :

1. Sabda (sound)	6. Fire
2. Akasa (ether)	7. Taste
3. Sparsa (touch)	8. Water
4. Vayu (air)	9. Smell
5. Colour	10. Earth.

Each succeeding principle is created out of the preceding one.

Thus the 24 principles or Tatwas enumerated above, are the forms of matter and energy composed of the three guns, Satwa, Raja and Tamas, which

are themselves transformations of the unmanifest Prakriti.

In this connection, a word of explanation regarding the five great elements may not be out of place. The word, elements, especially to those who are University Scientists, may be misleading. Perhaps the term 'elemental' may be more suited to the idea. Ether, air, &c. are primal conditions of gross matter. Ether is not to be confounded with space which is known as Avyakrita Akasa. Ether is the medium of vibrations forming sound. Air is not the atmospheric gas so called in Science Primers, but the medium representing motion in space. Fire includes all vibrations of light and heat, based on the principle of motion indicated by the term Vayu. Water does not mean the ubiquitous compound of oxygen and hydrogen, so well known to us, but includes liquids most comprehensively. Earth includes all solids.

In describing the properties of these great elements, it is usually said that the property of Ether is sound, that of Air is touch, that of Fire is colour, that of Water is taste, and that of Earth is smell. It is a fundamental idea that the attribute or quality of the cause is transmitted to the effect. Thus Vayu has not only its own peculiar property, touch, but also sound inherited from its parent Akasa. Fire similarly has both *sound* and *touch* in addition to colour. The fifth element, the Eart, has all the five properties, including the inherited attributes. The inherent property of each element, that which is peculiar to it, is the preponderating factor, and hence it is, that it is spoken of as its exclusive attributes.

The Brahmanda, the egg of the Universe, is an oval spheroid, the circumference of which is composed

of the three gunas and the twenty-four principles of matter. Within the Egg, are contained seven worlds, and seven surfaces, fourteen in all, represented as hatched inside a huge lotus-form in Narayana's Navel. The seven worlds are the following :—

(1) Bhoor (4) Mahar
(2) Bhuvar (5) Jana
(3) Swar (6) Tapas
(7) and Satya.

The seven surfaces are :—

(1) Atala (4) Talâtala
(2) Vitala (5) Rasâtala
(3) Sutala (6) Mahâtala
(7) and Pâtala.

The seven worlds are composed of the five great elements in varying density and proportion, some one or other element preponderating in each, which preponderance determines the designation by which that world is to be distinguished from the rest.

Thus tabulated :

Bhoor	is composed of	Prithivi
Bhuvar	do	Water.
Swar	do	Agni.
Mahar	do	Agni.
Jana, Tapas	do	Vayu.
Satya	do	Akasa.

The Talâs (surfaces) are all composed of the earth-principles in higher and higher degrees of density, the lower and lower we go.

Turning to the bodies encasing the Jeevas, there is a singular similarity of design and method with regard to their make and build. A close study and comparison enables us to realize how remarkably accurate is the saying that the miscrocosm (internal man) is a miniature-repetition of the macrocosm. We are forcibly impressed with the symmetry of the whole architecture, so that, we are driven to think of the great architect whose mind must have concieved, and willed, the natural selection, combination, and gradation, so indelibly readable on every part of the great fabric.

What we see of a man is but the Sthoola Sarira, understanding by that term, the gross body, the brain, nerves, and everything else, accessible to anatomy and physiology. This is the food-formed sheath of man, known as Annamaya Kosha Next inner to this, is the Sookshma Sarira, the subtle body otherwise called Linga Sarira This is the coating that accompanies the soul in all its wanderings from one gross body to another. It sticks to the Jeeva like a veritable leech until the final release. Sixteen things go to make up the stuff of this coating. These are the five Gnanendriyas (knowledge-organs), the five Karmendriyas (action-organs), the five Pranas (breaths), *viz.*, Prâna, Apâna, Vyâna, Udâna and Samâna, and the mind. The action organs, *viz.* hands, feet, etc., though usually supposed to be external organs, have their motor-centres in the Sookshma Sarira, and hence go to make up the subtle body. This Linga Sarira of 16 parts (षोडशकला:) embraces the

sheaths known as Pranamaya-kosha, Manomaya-kosha, and Vignanamaya-kosha.

We have an inner coating yet to deal with. This is Kârana Deha forming the Ânandamaya-kosha, the bliss-sheath next to the Jeeva itself.

We thus see that there are three bodies, Sthoola, Sookshma, and Kârana, embracing between them, five sheaths, Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vignanamaya, and Anandamaya Koshas.

The stuff of which the gross body of man is composed, is also the component matter of the Bhoor Loka (The terrestrial world.)

The composition of the Linga Sarira corresponds to that of Bhur, Bhuvar, Swar, and Mahar Lokas. The innermost sheath, Aandamaya, corresponds in make to that of the Jana, Tapas, and Satya Lokas.

The correspondence of the mircrocosmic stuff to the macrocosmic, means that no Jeeva can visit the world for which his sheath does not fit him, does not acclamatize him, as it were. For instance, no Jeeva can enter Swarga (which consists of light) with a gross body of flesh and blood such as we possess here below.

The coatings of man serve as planes for the play of his consciousness in various states. When he is wakeful (*jâgrat*), he works on the Sthoola Sarira, and Annamaya Kosa; when he is in dreamy sleep, he uses the Sookshma Sarira, covering the Prânamaya, Manômaya, and Vignânamaya Koshas. When he transcends dreams, and enters a state of dreamless sleep, (Sushupti), or one of trance,

he uses the inmost Deha and the Anandamaya Kosha. The Vishnu Roopa known as Visva or Vaiswanara presides over the wakeful state, and presents mental images to the consciousness of the Jeeva. Prâgna is the Vishnu form that gives the Jeeva a contact of spiritual bliss in dreamless sleep.

It is a very common idea that dreams are in every sense illusory and unreal. In the Shastras, the dream is frequently referred to as an object of illustrative comparison. Adwaitins harp on this reference as conclusive of the position that the wordly objects and pleasures, thus compared to dreams, are illusory and unreal. Sri Madhva holds that dreams are far from unreal. The objects seen in this state are objects built of the mind-stuff. The sensations experienced during the wakeful state remain stored in the mind as impressions (Vâsanas). These present themselves before the dreamer. If the man thinks that the objects, such, for example, as a pot, or a horse, that are dreamt of, are identical with what he had seen while awake, that is an illusion. It is the identity that is false. The mental images composed of the mind-stuff are true. That they are identical with external objects, is false. The comparison instituted in the Shastras between dreams and worldly pleasures and states, is often misunderstood and misinterpreted. The Scriptures only mean that the Samsâra and its pleasures are evanescent and short-lived like dreams. It is intended that man should not set his heart on the fleeting joys of the senses, for, the joys are transient like bubbles, and must soon vanish like the joys and images of dreams.

The earliest authoritative works setting forth very clear notions about matter and its evolution are the

treatises of Sánkhyas. The theory expounded by them has been adopted by all later Vedantins without much of demur. I have in this chapter indicated the outline with a view to draw attention to a few special points emphasized by Sri Madhva. Further elaboration seems unnecessary. The reader may peruse with profit the advanced Text Book of Sanatana Dharma Series, Banares, for full information on the subject.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL, APART FROM ITS MATERIAL SHEATHS.

Who knows if, at any time in the history of the world, materialism will heartily acknowledge a defeat and surrender the field to theism and its allies? Great teachers, prophets, saints, or sages, may drop from the clouds, may work miracles, pull society inside out, create revolutions in ideas, and drive thinking men to acknowledge God and the soul, still the moment they withdraw from sight, the shades of darkness close in, doubts appear and beget atheism, materialism, and what not.

Western science preserves a dignified silence in the matter, and refuses to commit itself to any dogma about the existence of soul and the life beyond. Many a scientist of repute has refused to admit God and spiritual life, because these are not capable of mathematical proof. Some suppose life to be but a mere function of matter and thought no more than a secretion of the brain, just as bile is that of the liver. Others have defined life as a bundle of consciousness and possibilities of sensation and no more. Materialists have denied the spirit, and idealists have denied matter: both have often denied the soul, the individual as well as the Supreme. This war is as old as the world, and no useful purpose will probably be served by recapitulating all the arguments that have been advanced *ad nauseum* pro and con.

No religion in the true sense of the word seems possible without a belief in God and the soul, accompanied by a firm faith in the relation between the two.

If man be no more than what anatomy discovers, mere flesh, blood, bones, muscles and tissues, stitched up in a bag or bags of skin, he is an ephemeral patch-work of dust, who returns at death to the dust whence he came. Religion has protested from beginning-less time against such an undignified view of humanity. Do we live after death? Or does the physical dissolution put an end to the individual? "To be or not to be," is the question. Every thinker puts this question to himself a thousand times, and racks his brain for an answer. Prophets and saints of every land have answered the question with an unhesitating affirmative. Revealed writings have echoed their testimony with a unanimous voice. Yet the question continues to be asked again and again.

It is hard to believe that death is the end of all individual existence. It is hard to reconcile oneself to the belief that all the hopes and aspirations of life are dashed to the winds so summarily, just because the skin and muscles give way. The belief in the existence of the soul and its immortality, is almost universal, though positivist reason sometimes dislodges it. The wish is no doubt father to the thought. But the wish, the irrepressible desire to be immortal, is itself a significant, suggestive, circumstance. As Max Muller states it, (in "Life and Religion" P. 175): "There is in man an irrepressible desire for continued existence. It shows itself in life in what we may call 'self-defence.' It shows itself at the end of life and at the approach of death in the hope of immortality." Why is this desire implanted in us, if immortality is but an unrealized and unrealizable phantom? Every instinct that nature bestows has a purpose at its back. No appetite is gifted by nature which is not meant to be

gratified for some providential purpose. The hankering after immortality cannot be there, unless immortality is there, embedded in the soul, and realizable at some time or other. Nature never makes mistakes. It never taunts us, never mocks at us. There is no reason to think that nature is capable of a flippant treatment of human instincts and aspirations. Those nations of the world, which dispose of their dead by burying them, believe in souls living after death, with the desire and the possibility of their establishing some reunion with the buried bodies. The Egyptian mummy is a remarkable tale-teller of this idea that the preservation of the corpse is a matter of immense importance to the departed soul, either for its continued peace and happiness, or for the accomplishment of some final reunion. Christians and Mahomedans bury the dead upon beliefs similar to this.

The nations that believe, not only in the immortality of the soul, but in metempsychosis also, burn their dead, so that the departed soul might not linger any more about the cocoon-shell, but pursue its further journey unhampered, by getting into fresh bodies. Western philosophers too are gradually allowing that, in order to account for some of the riddles and problems of life, metempsychosis (the law of transmigration) is the only philosophy that can be listened to.

In the very opening of his great teachings, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna to differentiate between the body and the soul. "Just as a person having cast off the worn-out clothes, gets other and fresh ones, so also the dweller of the body casts off the worn-out bodies and goes on to other and fresh ones."

" वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ॥
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥"

BAGAVAD GEETA II, 22.

This is the basic idea of Hinduism, that the soul is not the body, but is its owner, and that it travels from body to body in an almost infinite series of births and rebirths. The idea is common to Budhists, Jains, Nyayas, Vaiseshikas, Sankhyas, Adwaitins, Visistadwaitins, Dwaitins, Vallabhas, and all the other sects that have claimed homage in India. It was not unknown to ancient Europe. The only serious objection ever urged against transmigration is based on the commonplace idea that if every soul has had previous births, why should it have no recollection of its past life or lives. But the problem has undergone a most searching scrutiny at the hands of ancient and modern philosophers, and has been discussed threadbare in all its bearings by thinkers without number. We owe much to Theosophical writings for the flood of light thrown over the question by their lucid expositions on the subject.

Memory is after all but a very subordinate function of the mind. When we go into the middle age, we remember not our infancy or our youth with clearness. We are unable to recall any but those mental images which lie impressed with some vividity by reason of some remarkable circumstance or association. Many an idea lies buried in the sub-conscious strata of the soul. It is not impossible that these sub-conscious ideas should be awakened from their repose, and summoned to appear before the mental gaze, by the operation of some powerful cause. They are there, imbedded deep, but not beyond reach. Hundreds of them present themselves before us in dreams.

Hundreds more wake up at the bidding of strong introspection and meditation. Our books speak of Yogins who remembered their past with clearness and recounted their histories before learned audiences. Scepticism may treat this with sneer. But such abundance of testimony is not to be set aside so flippantly and light-heartedly as the sceptics would wish. Thinkers have felt the difficulty of accounting for instincts by the law of physical heredity alone. The infant just born, involuntarily opening its mouth and hankering after the mother's milk, is a puzzle, without the postulate of a previous existence and the theory of acquired experience. The contrasts and dissimilarities, very often of a marked nature, noted between the parents and the offspring, the genius born of the idiot, the criminal born of virtuous parents, predilections not traceable at all to heredity, have compelled thinkers to resort to the view, that, though physical heredity may go some way, it is not the full explanation of man's individuality, his tastes and aptitudes, his talents and capabilities, his habits and predilections, and all that goes summed up by the name of character.

If there is a God above, and He is just and merciful, how are the inequalities observed in the world explainable? Why is one man poor and another rich? Why is one prosperous, contented, and happy, and another grovelling in misery or poverty? Why is one able and talented, and another idiotic or imbecile? The Indian sage has answered this problem by pointing at the law of Karma, and at the individual soul as the subject of its operations. While the body is undergoing ceaseless change and decay, and while the mind and the senses are changing and decaying by constant wear and tear,

the soul alone abides, as the back-ground of the picture, the indestructible, undecaying, basis of life, the eternal principle which 'weapons cannot cut, fire cannot burn, waters do not wet, and wind does not dry, absolutely uncleavable and incombustible.' With believers like this, life is only an exile, a sojourn, while death is a release, though qualified, from the imprisonment of gross matter. Such a theory adds dignity to human nature and robs death of its terrors. Thus the first idea that has to be grasped at the very threshhold of religious study, relates to the existence of an individual soul who is the actor, agent, sufferer, and enjoyer, and who is, in the Vedantic language of metaphors, the string to which the pearls of sensory experience are suspended. It may shift its abode and vehicles ever so many times, but continues the same substratum of consciousness, which carries with it, in subtle and minute forms, the accumulated effects of Kármic experiences and progressions or retrogressions in the path.

We may next try to gather some ideas about the composition, size, and working of the individual soul as well as its inherent and accidental states and attributes.

With Adwaitins, the soul is but a manifestation, a mere appearance. It is often referred to as a wave on the ocean surface of universal life, a mere foam on the crest of the heaving billows, ultimately subsiding into, and identical with, the ocean at the bottom. Hence, Monism does not assign to the individual soul, either reality, size, or a local habitation. It is therefore a point of vital distinction between Sri Sankara on the one hand, and Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhva on the other, whether Sri Badarayana

asserts the Jeevatmas to be atomic in size, or predicates their all-prevasiveness. It is conceded that several aphorisms of the Brahma Sootras lay down the proposition that Jeevatmas are atomic. Sri Sankara's interpretation is that this is only the Poorva-Paksha view, a *prima facie* objection, set forth at some length for the purposes of refutation. The other commentators assert just the reverse of this position. They consider that Badarayana has laid down his own conclusion, the Sidhanta itself, in speeking of Jeevas as atomic. Dr. Thibaut, the great oriental scholar who has translated the Sankara Bhashya, (vide Sacred Books of the East, vols. 34 and 38) has made some forcible observations on the point in his introduction. He considers that having regard to the context and the wording of the Sootras in question, Sri Sankara's is an exceedingly forced interpretation. "What here strikes us at the outset" he says at Page 55 of the Introduction, "is the unusual length to which the defence of a mere *prima facie* view is carried. In no other place, the Sootras take so much trouble to render plausible, what is meant to be rejected in the end, and an unbiased reader will certainly feel inclined to think that in Sootras 19 to 28 we have to do, not with the preliminary statement of a view finally to be abandoned, but with an elaborate, *bona fide* attempt to estabilish and vindicate an essential dogma of the system."

Here is the parting of the ways between the school of Sri Sankara and the other schools. Hereafter, every step in the development of the systems widens the gulf. The initial conception of the individual soul being thus radically divergent, the

fabric of superincumbent ideas can hardly be expected to show signs of identity or similitude.

The souls being real and atomic, the next step is the belief that their number is countless. Sri Madhva says that there is no bit of matter in the universe that is not inhabited by a Jeeva. These countless Jeevas occupy every point of space as distinct units of intelligence absolutely different from one another and from the world of matter and material principles. They are scattered everywhere in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms of nature, and even beyond these. It is impossible to think of any material object without some Jeeva or Jeevas pervading it, so that, according to Sri Madhva, everything in earth and heaven is a living organism, composed of a soul or souls encased in matter. He says in his Tatwa Nirnaya, परमाणुप्रदेशेष्वनन्ताःप्राणिराशयः "Infinite are the souls dwelling in an atom of space." He says, in his great work, Anuvyakhyana.

गीतात्पुष्पफलावाप्तिःस्पर्शात्कार्श्यं रसात्स्थितिः ।
अपिवृक्षस्यदृश्यन्ते इतिनानात्मताभवेत् ॥

"Flowers and fruits spring up in response to music; some plants shrink in response to touch, some respond to feeling. Thus there is no object which is devoid of souls." Western science is gradually extending its discoveries to establish the truth of this conclusion. Francis Darwin, son of the great scientist, has collected proofs in support of the view that some plants have brains. He instances climbing plants displaying intelligence by feeling about with their tendrils as with fingers until they secure a proper hold. Captain Musgrave asserts that in the course of

a botanical visit to Columbia, he came across a carnivorous plant, with, as he maintains, a brain, a nervous system, and digestive organs. In support of the view that the universe is a vast expanse of animated nature with every atom of space filled up by Jeevas, the readers may refer to Professor Bose's remarkable volume entitled "Response in the living and the non-living", to find a corroboration of Sri Madhva's enunciation. Dr. Bose opines that every bit of matter, a clod of earth, a chip of metal, a block of wood, in short, every thing of what has been hitherto regarded as the inanimate world, is instinct with life, and answers tests of animal impulse and vibrations. He proves, by means of delicate instruments devised for the purpose, that a bar of iron, for example, lives like an organism, capable of wakefulness and sleep, and has its period of activity and rest, alternations of work and repose. He proves that it is capable of being stunned into trance, of being poisoned like an animal, and even of being killed. He made experiments before the Scientific Society of London in the presence of Lord Kelvin and other leaders of Science, and demonstrated his theory. A delicate instrument that tested the life of minerals, showed its vitality by a record of vibrations, and proved the varying stages of its vitality or its death, at the administration of suitable poisons calculated to suspend its life, stun its powers, or kill it outright. This remarkable discovery affords a corroboration of Sri Madhva's views about the existence and presence of animating souls in every particle of matter, souls totally distinct from one another, and endowed with qualities and capacities in varying measures, though possessing all the features characteristic of souls as a class.

In this connection, it is important to consider the relation of these souls to God, for, if souls be eternal verities, like God Himself, the conclusion may be jumped at that Jeevas are independent of God. If Dualism is vehemently dogmatic on any point, it is this, that the only independent principle in the universe is God, and that the individual souls and everything else depend on Him for their existence, powers, and attributes. God is the only eternity of eternities, the verity of verities, the soul of souls, the universal Animator. Spirit, matter, time and space, are eternal only from His will. He has the power to destroy them, to annihilate them, but does not choose to do so. It is His inscrutable, eternal will, to let them be eternal too, and abide as His colleagues, for ever, to work out his purposes and laws. All the souls lying within or without the egg of the universe as so many luminous stars suspended in space, are but *reflections*, in a peculiar sense, of Hari, the Supreme Being. They derive their light, energy, and all, from God. They will, think, and act, under his orders and laws, and are dependent entirely on His Grace. Permeated through and through by the Supreme Spirit, individual souls are, in fact, puppets that throb when He throbs, vibrate when He stirs, dance when He dances, just like a reflected image which faithfully reproduces every movement of the original.

The reader may not run away with the idea that this is an opposite extreme reducing souls to nothing. In one sense, we are all no-bodies, surely, as there is but One Independent Being in all the Universe, the vivifier and lifegiver of all, the great creator, sustainer, and destroyer. We pass through bondage and release under His Grace. But we are responsible agents all

the same, with some freedom of will and choice, granted to us by Providence. Though subject to His laws, the souls are free to choose means and ends, elect good Karmas or bad, commit sins or virtues, and acquire merit or demerit. The law of gravitation, for instance, holds us all in bondage and there is no escape from its grip and sway. It is the limitation and condition of all activities. But subject to its iron rule, we are free to choose and act. It does not compel us to move upward or downward or in any particular direction at any particular time. We are, to some extent, free, but we are at every step and turn confronted with the laws of nature that set limitations and conditions to which we are bound to conform. So it is with the relation of souls to God. These are reflected images by reason of their dependence. The reflection is neither illusion nor a result thereof. The original and the reflections are both eternal verities; only, the former is self-dependent and the latter are absolutely at the disposal of His will and mercy. The freedom and dependence enjoyed by souls is compared in Sootra Bhashya to the position of a carpenter, who is a free agent to some extent, but has to work under the orders of his employer.

Monists harp much on the theory of souls being reflected images as upholding their own philosophy They put forward Maya or Avidya (Nescience) as the mirror that reflects the images, and state that, when Nescience vanishes at the touch of knowledge, the individual souls disappear too. Sri Madhva contends that Maya is not the Upadhi that produces the reflection, that the dependence of souls on God is in virtue of the soul's spiritual nature and essence, that whatever the principle that causes the reflection

that too, is enternal with God, and with the Jeevas, and that no annihilation is therefore possible of Jeevas at all consequent on the supposed disappearance of Upadhis.

Man, then, is a miniature of God but a sorry miniature and no more. There is similarity between the two, in that both are chits, intelligences in essence, and both are *sat, existences*, verities in eternity. They, are unlike, in that God is self-dependent and the soul is dependent on Him, that He is perfect and the soul is imperfect, that He is pure and the soul is sullied, that He is omnipotent while the soul is weak and feeble, that He is great while the soul is low. Helpless, as we are, by ourselves, God has endowed us with attributes that form part and parcel of our spiritual constitution, and that are entwined, warp and woof in the very framework of our spiritual nature. Of these, let us try to glean few ideas.

The soul is a self-luminous principle which is both knowledge and knower rolled into one. It is consciousness, pure and simple, but a cogniser as well. In embodied life, it possesses organs of sense, but these are material and belong to its sheaths. The soul itself, apart from its sheaths, possesses prototypes of the material sense-organs, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and touch, composed of the spiritual substance and capable of receiving and transmitting sensations. The spiritual organs are not different from the spirit itself. They are differentiable only for the purpose of expression in words. It is with these senses that the released souls enjoy untold bliss. The individual soul thus possessed of organs in its spiritual essence, is capable of willing, thinking, and acting, has enjoyment and

suffering, irrespective and independent of the media of its sheaths and the appendages of those sheaths. Its organ of knowledge is called Sakshi, the witness, to which the material mind presents all its impressions. It is the cognising principle to which is due the consciousness of "I-ness" that forms the basis of all individuality.

Even God is not without limbs and organs, however startling the idea may seem to those who have always regarded the Supreme Being as a mere abstraction. It is impossible that the giver of all organs, the fountain-source of all sensory functions, should be himself devoid of any senses or organs. But the idea of the Almighty possessing eyes, ears, and so on, must be grasped with a due understanding and realisation of His Omnipotence. Whereas Jeeva is tied down, hand and foot, by laws out of which he has no escape, and cannot, for example, hear through his eyes, or see through his ears, whereas each of his organs has a specific function which alone it can perform being incompetent to poach into another's jurisdiction, God is absolutely independent of these limitations. He can cause any organ to fulfil any function. The Shruti says:

॥ अपाणिपादोजवनोगृहीता पश्यत्यचक्षुः सशृणोत्यकर्णः ॥

"Without hands and feet, he is swift and grasping; He sees without eyes, He hears without ears."

With regard to the soul being composed of Chit-Intelligence, it is important to grasp the position of Monists in order to contrast it with Sri Madhva's view on the subject. The universal soul of which the individual soul is said to be a manifestation, is nominally said to be *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda*, but upon analysis, it is found that Parabrahman is not a knower at all.

It is said to be *knowledge* and not a *knower*, so that God does not and cannot cognise a single object of the universe, and has no will, thought, or action. The Dwaitins protest against this view as degrading godhead into an inanimate luminosity. They refuse to bow down to a divinity that has no head to recognise the Bhakta and no heart to save him. The Dwaitins say that the universal soul as well as the individual soul are self-luminous principles, and that both are made up of Chit such as can cognise self and others by reason of their self-luminous character.

So far, the points noted seem to be common ground for the dualists of all persuasion. I now proceed to touch upon a few notions which appear to be the distinguishing features of Sri Madhva's philosophy. Sri Madhva holds that the countless souls of the universe are not occupying a dead level of equality. They may be all souls, all *chidatmas*, but there is no equality in point of their powers, capacity, tastes, desires, hopes, aspirations and destinies. No two men or animals are exactly alike in features or countenaces. So, no two Jeevas are exactly alike in their capacities and character. From Brahma downwards, the Jeevas remain classed into an infinite gradation of steps, each Jeeva having its own worth and place in the scale, and having other souls placed above and below it. Various are the operating causes of this gradation, some of them being primal and radical, while others are adventitious and accidental. Sri Madhva is perhaps the only teacher who has worked out this tenet with relentless logic, taking his stand boldly upon authoritative scriptures, and speaking out his convictions without mincing matters in the least.

The reader might see that if man were but another name for God, it is impossible to understand how the unbound became bound, how the perfect became imperfect. Monists give only a single answer, saying, "We don't know." If man is but God and all men are equal, how does it come about that there is as much disparity and diversity in the world as there are individual units. If Karma be the solution of the riddle why is it, again, that one Jeeva should lean to bad Karma and another to good. Sri Madhva considers that Jeevas are inherently unlike one another, and each has his appointed place in the scale and his allotted measure of happiness, misery, or an alloy of both.

It is said that the souls of human beings and animals pervade feebly in the systems, like the fragrance of a sandal-paste. The emanation is only of intelligence, of mere impressionability. It is not a very minute or delicate pervasion. Technically, this is known as chit-guna-Vyâpti. The souls of Rishis and Gandharvas pervade, it is said, as rays, radiate from a flame. The soul is the luminous centre and the emanations in the shape of rays are tangible projections of light. This is known as *Prakasato Vyâpti.* Higher souls than these, viz., Devas, are capable of a still higher pervasion. The souls of Devas penetrate bodily to some extent into their physical limbs. The spiritual organs themselves extend somewhat in the organs of their material body. This is the cause of the enormous power and strength of their physical constitution. This is called pervasion by parts. *Amsato Vyâpti.*

It must not be overlooked, that among the souls of these three divisions, there is infinite variety of difference in the degree to which the pervasion

appertaining to the class can occur. The soul of *Mukhya Prana*, for instance, can penetrate bodily *far* into his physical bodies, much farther than any other Jeeva's can. So it is downwards in the descending order.

While on this point, it may be convenient to touch upon an analogous distribution of the Jeevas into *Sámsas*, (those having parts) and *Niramsas* (those not having parts). The idea is that Devas and some Rishis are capable of taking, and living in, more than one physical form at the same time, and work out the ends of Karma. Indra, for example, can, while dwelling in Swarga, live as Arjuna in the earthly world. He is capable of splitting himself into parts, as it were, and living in various bodies at the same time and accomplish his evolution in various, contemporaneous, courses of life. It is given to no human being to accomplish this. This division of *Samsas and Niramsas* is not to be confounded with the idea conveyed by the expression "Amsato Vyapti," for, the latter refers to the pervasion of the Daivic soul into the body, while the former speaks of Devas taking on more bodies than one at a given time.

Illustrative of the utter dependence of souls on God is the circumstance, that no soul, embodied or released, ever dwells alone by itself. It exists always in company with the Universal Soul. God, the soul of souls, dwells in the heart of the soul, as he does in every particle of matter, the perennial fountain of the soul's vitalities. When the Jeeva is in Samsâra, he and God are two birds perched in friendly companionship on the allegorical peepul tree, the former engaged in tasting the sour and bitter fruits of the forbidden tree, and the latter simply looking on with a smile, self-contained and self-satisfied. This

twinship can never be broken, so that the Jeeva can never hope to break away from his in-dwelling mate and guardian to shuffle of the alliance to which it is indissolubly wedded.

Nor is this all. With Sri Narayana thus dwelling everywhere, there is Sri Lakshmi, the universal mother, God's inseparable companion, His consort, friend, and servitor. Lakshmi is an omnipresent principle coeval with God. She dwells along with Hari. She is the presiding Deity of inanimate matter (jadaprakriti), and governs Satwa, Rajas, and Tamas, in her triple form of Sri, Bhu, and Durga.

Besides this lordly pair, the soul has yet another principle permeating its spiritual frame. This is Mukyaprâna, the Chief Lord of Breaths. Though Mukhyaprana is a Jeeva himself, he is the presiding Deity of Jeevatmas, and, as such, dwells in, and permeates, every other soul of the universe, from Rudra down to the lowest Jeeva. It is Mukhyaprana that presides over all the spiritual organs of sense, sustains, balances, and vitalises the activities of the spirit. The prompters of the soul are two, Mukhya-prana and Satan (Kali). These are the two polarities influencing the tendency of every soul. The former has ingress into the spiritual cells themselves, while the latter keeps out of the spirit's frame-work, and projects his magnetizations from without, to deflect the soul into wickedness. Mukhyaprana is the only Jeeva who is absolutely unaffected by Kali's influence and is utterly beyond the pale of his magnetism.

The gradation of souls is not an arbitrary or capricious conception. It is superfluous to mention that the Geeta, Brahma Sutras, and other Scriptures, afford ample evidence of the theory. The evolution

and the involution of the universe is the basis of the gradation theory. When the creation begins at the end of Mahapralaya, or at the end of every Kalpa, the gunas, *Satva Rajas and Tamas*, are stirred into disproportion. The 24 principles of matter, viz., the Mahat, Ahamkara, Budhi, Manas, the ten sense-organs, the five sense-objects, and the five great elements, spring out in succession. The unfolding of each principle is from the higher principle into which it had in-folded *over-night*, i.e. at the end of the previous creation. One principle is said to be higher than another if the former came into evolution prior to the latter, gave birth, in a sense, to the latter, and forms the receptacle into which the latter involutes in the end. In this sense, Akasa is higher than Vayu (air), and Vayu higher than Agni, and so on. Everyone of these material principles has a presiding Jeeva who is deified by reason of his enormous powers and functions. The presiding Deity of Mahat (translated often into the *great consciousness*) is the Four-faced Brahma. He is the first born and the highest of Jeevas. Mukhya Prana is the future Brahma, the Four-faced. Rudra is the presiding Deity of Ahamkara, that springs out of Mahat. Hence Rudra is spoken of as the son of the Four-faced, and next in rank to his parent. Thus goes down the flight of steps, conceived on a very intelligent rationale, viz., the order of evolution and involution. The gradation of Devas and men is aot an idea originated by Sri Madhva. The advanced text-book Sanatana Dharma has the following explanation regarding the function and place of Devas.

"The work of creation proceeded by calling into existence, Suras or Devas कर्मात्मान: whose nature is action, that vast multitude of intelligent beings of

varying power and authority, who guide the whole course of nature and direct all its activities. Devas have their place, in nature, as the ministers of the will of Easwara, ruling, protecting, adjusting, with intelligence and power far greater than human, but still limited. The name 'Deva' shining, radiant, very well describes their resplendent appearance, their bodies being formed of a subtle luminous matter, and hence flasing out light. They are concerned with the matter-side of nature and the guidance of its evolution, and all the constructive energies studied by science are the energies of the Devas. On their work, depend the fruits of all human activities connected with production in all its branches. Those who seek for material prosperity need their continual co-operation".

Among distinctions and cross-distinctions, it is enough to allude to a few basic ones, in order to get a conception of the lines on which the system has been worked out. Souls are broadly divided into two classes, viz., 1. those that have gained Release (*Muktas*), 2. and those that have not secured it, i. e., are still in bondage, *Amuktas*. The latter class subdivides into two classes, viz., 1. those that are fit for release ultimately, 2. and those that are not. The Jeevas that are not qualified by inherent nature to attain Release are divisible into 1. those that are ever bound to be in Samsâra, 2. and those who go from Samsâra into eternal hell. The elementary treatise of Sri Madhva illustrates these positions, pointing out who are the persons belonging to each of these classes.

The classification of souls is bassed on the fundamental division of all souls into three classes, viz., Sâtwika, Rajasa, and Tamasa, according to innate in-

eradicable tendencies. The words Satwa, Rajas, and Tamas, should not mislead us into the supposition that it is the guna of the said names that causes this division by its superimposition. It is the Jeeva whose tendency is good, bad or indifferent, that attracts the guna akin to its nature and marches on the appropriate path. There is something inherent in the soul which accounts for its predilections towards virtue, towards wickedness, or a mixture of both, which forms the pre-disposing impulse that determines the direction of the soul's activities, and its final destiny. Some souls are thus preordained by their inherent aptitude to attain Mukti, others destine for the eternal hell, while a third class must keep revolving under the wheels of Samsara from eternity to eternity, now enjoying and now suffering, in endless alternation. (Nityasamsarins.)

No article of Sri Madhva's creed has provoked greater opposition or more hostile criticism than this tenet of his, classifying all souls into three eternal divisions. The eternal hell is a bugbear which is bad enough, without more. But that a section of innumerable souls should be bound to wend their way to that abode, with no possibility of escape, makes the blood of the benevolent philanthropist run icy in his veins. The theory of eternal damnation shocks the nerves beyond measure, and men refuse, be the proofs what they will, to accept it as beyond doubt. But a law of nature takes no body's nerves into consideration. The only question is, what are the proofs ?

CHAPTER IX.

SOME CONCEPTS OF GOD.

Sri Madhva is an uncompromising advocate of Theism in the fullest sense of the word. He opposed Atheism, Polytheism, and Pantheism, with all his might. His conception of God is one of sublime Monotheism, based on a strict interpretation of Vedas and the allied scriptures of authority. He is thus not only a Deist, but a Vedantin, though the latter expression has, owing to malice or misconception, been sometimes applied to the Adwaitin alone. The 2nd aphorism of the Vedanta Sootras of Badarayana defines God (Brahman) as 'the One from whom the origination etc., of the universe proceeds'. The conception of Godhead in this Sootra is the fatherhood of God. This is the basic idea of Vedanta, that "Brahman" is the father from whom the universe has sprung, by whom it is sustained, and dissolved. The idea accentuated is that of causation. God is conceived as the cause of causes, the universal cause, and herein, is the condensed essence of philosophy, over the meaning of which, thinkers have wrangled furiously in every age and in every land.

It is one of the elementary, fundamental, notions of our mental constitution, that every effect has a cause. All men believe in it and act on the belief. It is akin to the belief in an external world, to the belief in the veracity of our senses and faculties, to the belief in the trustworthiness of memory. There are, of course, philosophers that deny the external world. Berkley, for example, argues that we live in, and

are hemmed in, a world of sensation and can never out-soar the world we live in. There is no guarantee he says, that there is an external world corresponding to our mental images. This is the idealism expounded by some Indian philosophers too, called in Sanskrit, *Vignana Vâdies.* We cannot refute this theory by adducing syllogisms. It is enough to note, that all men, idealists or no idealists, *act on the belief* that there is an external world, and that this universal belief followed by action and conduct, is the best available evidence of the veracity of our senses. It may be or may not be that other proofs establish external objects. It may be that the external world is incapable of proof strictly so called. But the belief itself is referable to a fundamental necessity, and no argument can possibly make any idealist behave as if he did not believe in his house, his table, his food, his friends, his family, and so on. To take up another example, it may be impossible to prove the veracity of memory. The past cannot be re-called to bear witness to the correctness of our present impressions. But without memory, humanity cannot get on at all for an instant. No thought is possible without memory. No two words can be grasped, unless memory retains the impression of the first word and hands it on so as to be linked with the idea of a second word. Let the Atheist or Agnostic give us proof in respect to the external world or in respect to memory, such as he insists on in respect of the first cause. He is sure to fail.

All argument, all thought, comes to a sudden stand-still, if we question the veracity of our senses. The beliefs based on this assumption that our faculties are reliable, that they are not playing a trick upon us, and that they are not engaged in a treacherous

conspiracy to delude us from birth to death, have never proved a broken reed, and this must be sufficient testimony in the nature of things. This is the line of argument that Richard Armstrong adopts with great fervour in his work "God and the Soul."

Sri Madhva has spent many a chapter on this subject, insisting on this fundamental position. He says that the theorist who calls all his senses *Mayic*, is no theorist at all, because he cuts the very foundation of argument from under his feet. Every syllogistic reasoning implies postulates, and hypotheses. The impressions of knowledge derived through our faculties and senses are true and self-evident. The current impressions of objects contacted by the senses in the present time are called *Anubhavas.* Impressons of the past, viz., memory, are called Smriti or Smarana. Both are reliable and self-probative, unless disease or disorder of the organs is established to account for delusions. Assuming then that our senses and faculties are truthful, it is needless to argue much to establish the position that every occurrence in nature has a cause underneath. We can conceive of no event or incident without a cause. The idea of causality may be incapable of proof. But every thinker is convinced of this, and acts on the belief. It is a psychological necessity to think so. If we proceed to analyse the notion of causality, we arrive at the result that every act, event, or occurrence, has a volition as its prompter, a will-force giving the initial impulse. It is not the axe that cuts the tree. It is the wood-cutter's volition that causes the felling. John Stuart Mill seems to argue that by causation we mean nothing more than precedence in *time.* Cause and effect are nothing more than sequence in time, according to his view.

At this rate, Monday should be the cause of Tuesday, and darkness the cause of light. A cause is certainly more than mere precedence.

Nor can a mere non-intelligent principle, such as a law of nature, be an ultimate cause.

॥नचकर्मविमामलकालगुणप्रकृतीशमचित्तनुतद्धियतः॥

says Sri Madhva : Karma, illusion, aberration, time, attributes (gunas), or matter, cannot be the cause, for they are non-intelligent and incapable, therefore, of volition. A volition proceeding from chit-Intelligence, is, in the last resort, the source of every movement, of every action, of every vibration.

It is not uncommon to say that the cause of the apple falling down, is the law of gravitation, and that of the railway train in motion, is steam. This is a loose statement of 'causality.' A law of nature is only a statement of fact and no more. Our experiments and observations are collected together, bundled up under a heading, and docketed with a name, as a law of nature. The law is only an explanation of the phenomenon, not the cause of the occurrence. Thus, Christian thinkers too have argued that the universe in motion acts under the impulse of a mighty volition, called God, inasmuch as the idea of cause resolves, in the end, into volition at the bottom.

This reasoning, if correct, leads us to admire the definition of Brahman given in the Vedanta, for, the leading idea therein accentuted is that God is the *Universal cause*, that God is the will-force that accounts for the worlds from the infinitesimal vibration of the molecules to the thrilling march of the starry galaxy in orbits immeasurable. We are led to this conception of the first cause by the simple proof of our faculties

which vouch for the truth that every movement has a cause and that every cause is volition in its final shape. God thus stands revealed to us by his power as the cause of all causes.

The aphorism under consideration does not stop with creation as the only function of God. Sri Madhva explains *the etcetera* in the aphorism by quoting texts to show that God is the father not only of creation, but of preservation, of destruction, government, knowledge, ignorance, bondage and release. God is, in short, the omnipotent and omnipresent author of all. In order to understand and realize the full force of the ideas implied by the 'etcetera' of the definition, it is important to grasp the kind of theism that Sri Madhva holds to as the true belief in Godhead. Naiyayikas, reputed to be acute logicians, say that God possesses only a few qualities, only eight in number. Those Sankhyas who admit a Supreme Being, make Him an appendage of Prakriti, a mere hanger-on to help the latter in her work. Even among European theists, there seems to be a section of believers whose idea of God is somewhat peculiar. They say that God created the world at some time or other and set it going like a watch-maker setting up the hairspring and the wheels, and that he remains looking on while the worlds roll forward unaided and and uninterfered with. They seem to think that God may interfere on occasions with the course of nature by interposing a miracle, but, that otherwise, He does not signify His presence in nature. This is a narrow conception of His fatherhood. Carlyle levels his satire at this "absentee God sitting idle ever since the first Sabbath at the outside of the universe and seeing it go."

A higher conception than this is that God pervades through every conceivable atom of the universe, occupies every point of space, ever engaged in creation, preservation, destruction, and all the rest. This theory is known in English writings as the "immanence of God" in the universe, a theory fervidly set forth by a large school of western thinkers including Wordsworth, Theodore Parker, and Carlyle in language often misunderstood to be pantheistic in drift.

Just as the human body is swayed by a will-force whose outflow results in human activity, so the will-force called God dwells in every part of the universe, smaller than the smallest particle and mightier than the mightiest. (अणोरणीयान्महतोमहीयान्), sustaining or destroying names and forms, adjusting the equilibrium of motions, conferring knowledge or ignorance, and regulating Samsara and Salvation. God is the greatest in-dweller in every heart, controlling the will-force itself of the individual soul. He is the Antaryamin of matter as well, which term includes, in oriental philosophy, the ideas of force and energy. Not a blade of grass waves without Him (तेनविनानतृणमपिचलति) and all is governed by his volition, (His Icha) and is permeated by it. He is present nearer than the nearest, directing everything. This is the idea of God's 'Immanence', the omnipresence that the Vedanta definition seeks to express.

The next idea that flows from the definition is that of a Personal God as the Ruler of the Universe. To some people, "Personal God" reads derogatory. Some people associate limitation and derogation with the idea of a Personal God. They think that a man-shaped God invested with human forms, what-

ever the degree of magnification, is a conditioned, limited, being, whom it is not worth while worshipping. But neither Sri Madhva nor any other theologians believing in a Personal God, set limitations on God's infinity. There is no intention to detract from His great merit as Infinitely Perfect. But He may be a Personal God consistently with being transcendent. There are two ways of looking at this. God is a personality inasmuch as He is a mighty will-force, or centre of will-forces. Man's personality has nothing to do with his imperfections, but turns on his being a unit of self-consciousness independent of other units. The consciousness of selfhood and a self-determining will, and a self-contained capacity of thought, differentiates one person from another. Limitation is no ingredient of this idea, though, no doubt, our egoism, will, thought, and action are all little pigmies of strength. We may understand a Personal God, to be a centre of consciousness, will-force, thought, and action, a unit whose strength is beyond measure and beyond conception. It is no doubt the fashion to speak of an "Infinite Person" as a contradiction in terms. It is difficult, on close analysis, to find out wherein the contradiction lies.

Sri Madhva absolutely refuses to make of God a non-willing, non-thinking, and non-acting, mass deemed *Sat, Chit, Ananda*, from mere courtesy. God according to him is Icha, Gnana, and Kriya. He is therefore the efficient cause of the Unvierse, bringing about effects like a potter producing pots out of clay operated on by instruments. He is not the material cause of the world, for, he is as different from the universe, as the individual soul is from his physical frame. To hold God the

material cause of the universe is to adopt Pantheism, which holds that all is God and God is all, that every existence is Deity and Deity is every existence, God and the universe being conterminous and identical.

The material cause is not the agent that sends an influx of will-power to produce a result. The will and its result stand no doubt in alliance, but in antithesis. Who can prove the bridge between the will and the action that follows, or the bridge between one consciousness and another consciousness, to be dogmatic about their coalescence or identity ?

अहमात्मागुडाकेशःसर्वभूताशयास्थितः ।
गामाविश्यचभूतानिधारयाम्यहमोजसा ॥

Says the Lord, in Bhagavat Geeta: "I am the in-dwelling soul residing within the heart of every creature. I pervade the earth and everything born, and sustain it by my power." To this effect, scores of authority may be cited from every page of the holy writings. Of God, it is said in Sruti :

श्रोतामन्ताद्रष्टाऽदेष्टाघोष्टाविज्ञातासर्वेषांभूतानामन्तरपुरुषः ॥

"He is the hearer, thinker, seer, ordainer, announcer, knower in detail, the inner guide of all beings."

यथादारुमयींयोषांनरःस्थिरसमाहितः ।
इंगयत्यंगमंगानितथाराजन्निमाःप्रजाः ॥

"Just as a man having a settled and definite purpose makes a wooden doll dance, or as a man sets his own limbs and fingers in motion, O King, so does the Almighty Lord cause these creatures to act."

Taking 'Personal God' to mean a Being with a tangible form perceivable by the senses, it is still nothing absurd to regard the Supreme Being as possessing or assuming forms. Purusha Sookta describes the Lord as possessing a thousand heads, eyes, and feet. The Paingin's Sruti declares:

> बुद्धिमनोंगप्रत्यंगवत्तांलक्षयामहे ।
> बुद्धिमान्मनोवानंगप्रत्यंगवानिति ॥
> सद्देहस्सुखगंधश्चज्ञानभास्सत्पराक्रमः ।
> ज्ञानज्ञानस्सुखसुखःसविष्णुःपरमोऽक्षरः ॥

"We now tell you of the Lord's being endowed with knowledge, mind, body, and limbs. He is of imperishable body. He is fragrance. He is radiant with knowledge He is of unthwarted prowess, of immense wisdom, of immense bliss. He is the Lord, Vishnu, Supreme, and imperishable."

The book known as "Sri Krishna" by Baba Bharati, contains some very forcible observations on this point. He sees no reason to think that God should be formless. He says that it is absurd to think of forms emanating from anything formless. Just as the sun has a form-centre, from which rays of heat and light emanate and radiate, far and wide, so, God may have form-centres from which sparks may emanate, pervading as much space as he chooses to bless. He may increase or decrease their number, or may make them innumerable. He may make any form as brilliant as he chooses, and subdue or increase its splendour to suit himself to his creatures. He may descend as incarnations on the earth, or may take forms beyond the earth in other planets or upon other planes. It may be that Divine Forms are not composed of material stuff. It may be that they are consummately

pure and perfect. But this is no argument to prove that the Supreme Being is formless.

The foregoing remarks lead us to the next position that God is conceived in the Dwaita system to be a Being full of attributes, of auspicious excellences, and that he is good and great, powerful and wise, just and merciful, intelligent and conscious, and so on, to an endless series. He is without a flaw, misery, sorrow, or weakness; and the whole hosts of suffering to which mortal flesh is heir, are absent in their totality from his composition.

The conscious author of creation, preservation, and destruction, cannot but be a perfection of attributes, if language has any meaning at all. गुणपूर्ण निर्दोष—"Full of perfect attributes" and "free from flaws" is the burden of the whole refrain, a chorus that the readers meet with, hundreds of times in every book of Sri Madhva and his followers. It is an article of the creed, that every devotee should seize hold of this and lay it unto his heart.

This description of God-head brings us into direct conflict with theories which love to speak of God as formless and attributeless.

Dr. Thibaut's introduction to the Sankara Bhashya contains some pointed remarks on the Vedanta definition under consideration. He says at P. 92. "Placing myself at the point of view of Sankara, I am startled at the outset by the second Sutra of the first Adhyāya, which undertakes to give a definition of Brahman. 'Brahman is that, whence origination, and so on, of this world, proceed. What, we must ask, is this Sutra meant to define?

That Brahman, we are inclined to answer, whose cognition, the first Sutra declares to constitute the task of the entire Vedanta, that Brahman whose cognition is the only road to final release; that Brahman, in fact, which Sankara calls the highest. But, here, we must object to ourselves, the highest Brahman is not properly defined 'as that from which the world originates.' In later Vedantic writings whose authors were clearly conscious of the distinction of the higher absolute Brahman and the Lower Brahman related to Maya or the world, we meet with definitions of Brahman of an altogether different type. 'That from which the world proceeds' can, by a Sânkara, be accepted only as a definition of Iswara, of Brahman which, by its association with Maya, is enabled to project the false appearance of this world, and it certainly is improbable that the Sutras should open with a definition of that inferior principle."

Sri Madhva, protests, as Sri Ramanuja did before him, that the Sutras do not proclaim a higher and a Lower Brahman, the one without attributes and the other with attributes. While speaking of Dr. Thibaut's view I am tempted in this connection to quote again his conclusion about the drift of the Brahma Sootras, found at page 100 (c) of the introduction.

"If now, I am shortly to sum up the results of the preceding enquiry as to the teaching of the Sootras, I must give it as my opinion that they do *not* set forth the distinction of a higher and lower knowledge of Brahman, that they do *not* acknowledge the distinction of Brahman and Iswara in Sankara's sense; that they do *not* hold the doctrine of the unreality of the world, and that they do *not*,

with Sankara, proclaim the absolute identity of the individual and the highest self."

It is often urged that the Upanishads do not lay down a positive definition of God, but that they make a tortuous, laboured, endeavour to point to him by a series of negations. They say that God is not this, not that, and so on, and leave Him alone after pushing Him beyond the pale of all known objects; a definition usually referred to as the नेतिनेति *Neti Neti* description. The true import of these passages is not and cannot be that God possesses no attributes and that He is a mere negation For, what becomes of descriptions like this, that He is *Sat*, *Chit*, *Ananda*, that He is Atma, that He is Amrita, and heaps of other attributes. The true meaning is, if we are to get out of a most flagrant contradiction, that, whatever attribute is conceivable by the limited understanding of man, it falls infinitely short of the reality of the Divine attribute. If we think of Power or Wisdom or Justice or Mercy or Bliss, our notion is nothing to what God really is in these respects. No predicate that we can think of is worthy of the Infinite Being that is the home of perfection.

A few words have been said in explanation of Sri Madhva's position as opposed to Atheism and Pantheism. A cardinal notion of his philosophy has to be mentioned that brings out his position in respect to Polytheism.

Sri Madhva regards Brahman, who is no other than Vishnu in another name, to be the only independent Principle of the Universe. In his primer known as *Tatwa-Sankhyâna*, wherein, he states the

categories of his system, he says that the two most fundamental principles are Swatantra and Aswatantra, the self-dependent Principle and what is dependent on that. It is an utterly wrong notion that the great teachers and prophets of India ever worshipped a multiplicity of gods. This is a gross misrepresentation of Hinduism by the ignorance of Christian missionaries. 'Gods and Demigods' is the expression coined by English translators to convey the meaning of terms such as Devas, Gandharvas, etc. The Hindu scriptures do not create a confusion at all between the Supreme Being and the host of gods and demigods, angels, or archangels, whatever we may choose to call them. No doubt, Sri Madhva does not hurl perdition at those who worship Indra, Chandra, Varuna, the Bhootas, and the spirits. But he says, adopting the language and tone of Sri Krishna, in Bhagavat Geeta that the only path to the goal is a knowledge of and communion with the Supreme Being.

It will be grievous misnomer to call this system, or Ramanuja's, *Polytheism* of any type. They hold that Vishnu is the only Independent Being. He is at the top of the series. He is beyond men and Devas, superior to them, infinite times multiplied by infinity. He is the 'One without a second' of the Upanishads, peerless in power and position, peerless in every conceivable quality. He is subject to no laws of Karma or of anything else. Everything else is governed by His will and wish.

Cardinal Newman defines God in the same terms as Sri Madhva, as "an absolutely Self-dependent Being and the only being who is such."

If the word 'Absolute' is supposed to suit Godhead better, it is only because there is confusion about its import. Dr Calderwood says, 'the Absolute is that which is free from all *necessary* relations, that is, which is free from every relation as a condition of existence; but it may exist in relation, provided that *relation* be not a necessary condition of its existence.' J. S. Mill says "that a better definition of an absolute being could scarcely be desired." Sri Madhva's emphasis on "Independence' touches the crucial point in the definition of the Absolute.

Lastly, it is the fashion in some quarters to say that, if not Sri Sankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva, the Vedas at least emphatically support Polytheism and nature-worship. The following quotation from the Rigveda should be enough to crush this ostensible view. The first Mandala of the Rigveda pours forth a strain of rich melody about the One God above gods, the God Supreme of the Universe. It has been loosely translated as follows:—

"What God shall we adore with sacrifice
Him let us praise; the golden child that rose
In the beginning; who was born the Lord,
The one sole Lord of all that is—who made
The earth and formed the sky—who giveth life
Who giveth strength, whose bidding gods revere
Whose hiding place is immortality,
Whose shadow, death: who, by his might, is king
Of all the breathing, sleeping, waking world,
Who governs men and beasts, whose Majesty
These snowy hills, this ocean with its rivers,
Declare; of whom these spreading regions form
The arms; by whom the firmament is strong

'Earth firmly planted and highest heavens
Supported, and the clouds that fill the air
Distributed and measured out; to whom
Both earth and Heaven, established by His will
Look up with trembling mind; to whom revealed
The rising sun shines forth above the world.
Wherever let loose in space, the mighty waters
Have gone depositing a fruitful seed,
And generating fire, there He arose
Who is the breath and life of all the gods
Whose mighty glance looks round the vast expanse
Of watery vapour—source of energy
Cause of the sacrifice—the only God
Above the gods. May He not injure us!
He, the creator of the earth,—the righteous
Creator of the sky, creator too
Of oceans bright and far-extending waters".

These lines are no outbursts of nature-worship, no fetish or idolatry of the elements and the forces of nature.

Herein, the Supreme Being is delineated with force and emotion as the universal ruler and father and the only Being who is such. There is no whisper about the plurality of gods on a footing of equal power, and co-ordinate sway. Here is omnipotence and omnipresence and omniscience as clearly declared as language can do it.

One more passage from the Vedas and this shall be the last. "Perfect truth, perfect happiness, without equal, immortal, absolute unity whom neither speech can describe nor mind comprehend; delighted with his own boundless intelligence; not limited

by space and time; without feet, moving fast; without hands, grasping all the worlds; without eyes, all surveying; without ears, all hearing; without an intelligent guide, understanding all; without cause, the first of all causes; all ruling, all powerful, the creator, preserver, transformer of all things; Such is the great One." Sir William Jones' Works (vol. VI).

CHAPTER X.

IS GOD KNOWABLE ?

Sri Madhva's answer to this question is an emphatic affirmative. As interpreted by him, the 3rd and the 5th aphorisms of the Vedanta Sootras, declare that Brahman is known through the Shastras (scriptures), and that He is not beyond knowledge and expression. The two aphorisms are शास्त्रयोनित्वात् and (2) ईक्षतेर्नाऽशब्दं ; "For, it is that of which the means of cognition is the authoritative word," (2) " since it is the object of perception, it is not what cannot be spoken of." Other commentators whose philosophy is different, interpret the aphorisms, differently.

It is not difficult to quote scriptural texts whose apparent meaning puts God beyond the range of thought and words. Nothing is more common than the description of God, in theological literature, as something utterly unknowable. Man is limited and conditioned ; he cannot possibly know the ' unlimited and unconditioned'. This argument is fair enough in a sense. To say, however, that no devotee can have any glimpse of the Almighty by means of any sense or faculty, physical or spiritual, seems subversive of all religions. It is necessary to investigate the point somewhat closely, in order to see whether we should consistently with intellectual honesty, surrender religion as the figment of fevered brains.

A great writer describes religion as meaning, in the broadest sense, the theory and practice of duties which result from the relation between God and man. Max Muller says " Real religion requires

more than a belief in God; it requires a belief in man also, and an intimate relation between God and man." Cardinal Newman says that 'neither a belief in God by itself nor a belief in the soul by itself would constitude religion, and real religion is founded on a true perception of the relation of the soul to God and of God to the soul'.

The Sanatana Dharma text-book (advanced, page 337) is eloquent in describing the life of reverence which, when carried to its highest degree and addressed to God, forms the basis of religious life. "True reverence primarily expresses itself in worship, and secondarily, in treating with respect all ideas about God, all things connected with His worship, sacred places, sacred objects. Reverence being due to a sense of His infinite superiority attracting love by virtue of His Supreme wisdom and compassion, it will naturally be accompanied by *humility*, the willing recognition of comparative littleness, by *faith* in, and therefere *submission* to, His wisdom; and by *devotion and gratitude* responding to his conpassion, leading to complete *self-sacrifice* in his service. The steady cultivation of these virtues, the fruits of love directed to God, comprise our duty to Him."

The reader may lay stress on and note the words Reverence, Humility, Faith, Submission, Devotion, Gratitude and Self-sacrifice used in this passage. These fairly sum up the duties of religious life. Thus, no religious life seems possible, if there be no means of knowing or communing with God. If religion be mere fancy or frenzy, all this fabric in Vedanta literature will be only a fool's paradise. The sooner we get out of it, the better.

Herbert Spencer and the followers of his school are chiefly responsible for the populr notion among the English-educated classes that the *finite* cannot know the *infinite.* He propounds the view that as the human mind can conceive only objects with ends or finality, the 'Infinite' which, *ex hypothesi* has no terminus, is beyond conception.

Max Muller has devoted several chapters (in his work) "Thoughts on life and Religion" to prove that this theory is only partially correct. It may be remembered that the difficulty started by the Spencerian school holds good with regard to finite objects too. Sri Madhva instances the case of a man saying that he knows the Meru Mountain, as in point. We see but a small fraction of the Mountain, a tiny part of its exterior surface and say that we know it. Is Meru unknowable or unknown, because no man has seen all its boulders and forests, or its bowels and contents? It is no delusion for us to say that we know it. Our perception of the Mountain is enough to prove its existence, though it grasps but an infinitesimal part of its composition and nature. We may be incompetent, because of our limitations, to know God as he is, to know him in all His aspects and attributes, but the limitations are no hindrance to our catching a glimpse of Him and being convinced that He is.

"Beyond the reach of words and thoughts."! How variously has this been interpreted and understood. Atheists use it as a valuable weapon to destroy theism; for a God that is beyond the range of words and thoughts, is unknowable and virtually non-existent. The sceptic and the agnostic are not slow to quote this scripture, and repudiate the basis of

religious obligations. The pantheist uses it as an argument against the assertion of a Personal God. Dwaitins explain it to mean only that God cannot be *fully* conceived and cannot be *fully* described, God is beyond words, only in the sense, that no word that we can think of is good enough for Him, or can convey a full idea of His greatness.

The question is whether there is anything in our nature that points to a perception of the Infinite, directly or by implication, as a necessity, to any sense or faculty or capacity, patent, or latent by reason of which the Infinite presses upon our consciousness ?

These are three avenues through which knowledge is possible to us viz., (1) our senses directly ; (प्रत्यक्षं) (2) Inference for Reasoning (अनुमानं) (3) Testimony of words (आगमः) : of these, which is the avenue through which the Infinite can be known ?

I cannot vouch for the physical senses cognizing the Infinite, nor can Reasoning alone land us to a Realization of God. Sri Madhva insists that the testimony of the Vedic word is undoubtedly the source of Divine knowledge. Of this, however, later on.

It is important to remember that the expression 'Infinite' is perhaps as old as the world. It is not an invention of modern times. The idea conveyed by the word has been known from the very infancy of humanity, from the first glimmerings of intelligence in the very dawn of human thoughts and aspirations. How did this word and this idea get into vogue, if the Infinite was wholly beyond the pale of conception ?

It seems to me that the idea of the finite necessarily implies the Infinite as its background, and that the two ideas are necessary counterparts and complements of each other, and that the one cannot be conceived irrespective and independent of the other.

Max Muller says: "with every finite perception there is a concomitant perception, or a concomitant sentiment, or presentiment, of the Infinite. From the very first act of touch, or hearing, or sight, we are brought into contact not only with the visible, but also, at the same time, with an invisible universe. We have in that perception of the Infinite, the root of the whole historical development of religion." Again, at page 90, "The idea of the Infinite which is at the root of all religious thought is not simply evolved, by reason, out of nothing, but supplied to us in its original form by our senses. Beyond, behind, beneath, and within the finite, the Infinite is always present to our senses. It presses upon us. It grows upon us from every side. What we call infinite in space and time, in form and word, is nothing but a veil or net which we ourselves have thrown over the infinite. The finite by itself without the Infinite is simply inconceivable." Such is Max Muller's explanation of the religious instinct implanted in man in every age and in every part of the globe.

It is therefore conceivable that there lies implanted in us, some sense, some faculty, that has the potency to express itself in some form of religion. Such is the truth about human language, for instance. Even if all the extant languages of the

world, all the dictionaries, lexicons, and grammars, were swept away by some cataclysm of nature, and man left to shift for himself and thrown back on his own unaided resources, he would soon babble and form a new language. It would shoot forth from the faculty of speech that lies rooted and imbedded in human nature. So it may be with religion as well. Even if all the systems of religion were swept away, the religious faculty in man would sprout out of the soil and rear its head towards Heaven, wafting new forms and formulæ of prayers in its efforts to grasp and adore the Infinite. Variously has this faculty, the germinating seed of religion, been conceived and described in religious literature.

Max Muller very often describes this faculty by the name of 'faith.' He gives to the word a peculiarly technical significance by identifying it as the sense with which man is endowed in order to perceive God, and by which, he is enabled to get an intuition of God.

In a previous chapter, it may be seen that Sri Madhva inculcates the view that the Jeeva has spiritual organs of sense apart from its sheaths. The use of those organs highly etherial in their composition may become somewhat intelligible in this connection. His theory of Aparoksha or God-vision is based on the idea that a communion of the human spirit with the divine is possible, and is the only road to the goal. Physical senses may be feeble, but the spiritual eye whose capacity has been sharpened and invigorated by a long course of penances and contemplation, can vision God face to face, and hold spiritual communion for a period of time suited to the capacity of the individual.

The 11th chapter of the Bhagavat Geeta contains a magnificent description of Arjuna visioning the Lord's Universal Form in all its glory, with the aid of eyes specially gifted to him for the occasion. Those who believe in the Lord's song as Inspired Word would need no proof for the position that a qualified Bhakta may vision God, if he secures the grace of the Lord.

We are told that, every day of our lives, when we go to sleep, we enjoy a touch, an embrace of the Divine essence. When we are wakeful, Vaisvânara or Viswa is the form of Vishnu that presides over the wakeful state. When we dream, another form of Vishnu, Taijasa, keeps watch and ward. If we get beyond this, and sleep a profound undisturbed sleep, the Jeeva is in contact with the Lord Prâgna, and gets a dip into the essense of bliss. It is a foretaste of heavenly bliss, enjoyable ultimately in Moksha. Hence it is, that when the man awakes, he exclaims, "I have been so happy in sleep," having been in a condition absolutely free from sensuous experiences.

To those who believe in Visvaroopa, in the possibility of Bimbâparoksha, and in the Pragna's embrace while asleep, there is the most forcible illustration of God being perceivable, the God who is supposed to be far away and attainable by a wearisome course of meditative penances, the self-same God who is the nearest of the near, whom the Jeeva approaches whenever the fatigued senses go to rest, allowing him (the Jeeva) a brief liberty, on his parole, to visit the Father seated in the heart.

With the spread of science, a growing school of philosophers is, of late, transfering allegiance

from what is styled supernatural religion to natural religion. While supernatural religion claims to rest on scriptural revelation as its source, natural religion appeals to God as revealed in nature, in the power and majesty of natural laws. Richard Armstrong waxes eloquent over the Intuition of God excited by the sense of the Beautiful in nature. He says "To some, a sublime scenery, to some, quiet meads and streams, to some, the ever unresting sea, to some, the marvel of the mighty stars, to some, a way-side flower, to some again, the mysterious charm of music or of song, to some, a poem, to some, the face of a little child, to some, a face beautiful with the story of a long and faithful life, has most quickening power." In this, he sees "an immediate and direct perception, an intuition, a seeing, of God by the immediate sensibility of the spiritual organ".

The idea of a spiritual communion, evoked by a sense of the beautiful in nature has been the theme of poetical inspiration in all ages and countries. Tennyson puts it in his famous lines :

> "Speak to Him though, for He hears,
> And spirit with spirit can meet ;
> Closer is He than breathing
> And nearer than hands and feet."

Corresponding to the *Sthita Pragna* of the Geeta, the Aparoksha Gnanin of Sri Madhva, the self-less Avadhoota of the Bhāgavata, the West has its introspective saint who is known as the Mystic, whom Richard Armstrong defines (God and Soul, Page 178) as "one who claims to see God and divine things

with the inner vision of the soul, a direct apprehension, as the bodily eye apprehends colour, as the bodily ear, apprehends sound. His method is simply contemplating; he does not argue or generalize or infer. He reflects, broods, and waits, for light." This description fits in with remarkable accuracy with *Sadhuism* found in India and described in our books, wandering gangs of Ascetics deeply meditative and looking mute, deaf, and dull, more or less imbecile lunatics begging for bread, but, occasionally, open their lips to give utterance to profound wisdom.

So far, about natural religion. No religious system has, however, contented itself with resting its claims upon pure revelations of nature, and relying on deductions of unaided reason, for its dogmas or tenets; and Hinduism is no exception to the rule.

The great body of scriptures known as the Vedas is the Revealed Word forming the bed-rock of Hinduism. God is, according to Sri Madhva knowable through the Shastas. He understands by the term, the four Vedas (Rig, Yajus, Sama, and Atharva), Bharata, Pâncharatra, and Moola Ramayana and whatever work adopts and elucidates the teachings therein contained.

ऋग्यजुस्सामाथर्वाश्च भारतंपंचरात्रकं ।
मूलरामायणं चैवशास्त्रमित्यभिधीयते ॥
यच्चानुकूलमेतस्य तच्चशास्त्रंप्रकीर्तितं ।
अतोन्योग्रन्थविस्तारो नैवशास्त्रंकुवर्त्मतत् ॥इतिस्कांदे ॥

The orthodox view is that the Vedas are eternal works not composed by any auther, human or divine, and that there is no truth in the Universe not contained in the Vedas.

All the Hindu systems seem to accept the view about the eternal character of the Vedas, but each explains the meaning of it by understanding eternality in its own way. Among orthodox Mādhwas themselves, one school goes so far as to say that the sentences and the words of the Vedas are uncreated and eternal in their sequence and order as now recited, and that God simply gives utterance to them and reveals them at the beginning of every Kalpa cycle. Another school holds that the Varnas (the letter-sounds) of the Vedas are alone eternal and that the sequence is not.

Modern tendency is to interpret the eternality of the Vedas to mean that the truths of the Vedas, embracing as they do, every germ of knowledge, are eternal and unalterable.

In "Sri Krishna", Baba Bharati sets forth an interesting, orginal explanation. He argues that every movement has its expression in sound, and that the Veda is the sound-expression of the Divine attributes. As an illustration, we see that the sensation of pain has its expression in the contortion of the face and muscles, and its sound-expression in some from of 'oh' or 'ah' which follows the sensation in a boisterous or subdued articulation. Similarly, surprise, mirth, humour, and contempt, have appropriate sound-expressions, of laughter, ejaculation, giggle, or sneer. Hence it is argued that the Veda is the sound-manifestation of God, and eternally co-existent with the divine qualities of which they are the sound-expressions.

If Vedas were considered the production of an author, it would be impossible to rely on them without other authority to vouch for the trustworthi-

ness and omniscience of that author. Such an argument would of course land us in a *regressus in infinitum*, unless God were admitted the author. But a Veda is necessary to accept God, as an omniscient Being, the ruler of the world. This lands us in a vicious circle of logic, the two positions above mentioned being mutually inter-dependent.

It was felt by Sri Madhva and other Hindu teachers, that no Dharma, by which religion and duty were both meant, was possible without the authority of the Self-existent Word not liable to be suspected as savouring of imperfection. It is the author that transmits his flaws and imperfections to his production and renders the latter faulty and imperfect. The Revelation that is to unveil the Isis must be absolutely above suspicion, to effect its purpose. The foundation of Dharma can only be something like the self-existent Vedas, and not a human production. It is impossible to say that Dharma so based is not in vogue in the world. Such is not the testimony of history, of universal experience. Hence, it is argued, that, though men may have forgotten the origin of Dharma, its ultimate basis is not utility, not human legislation, not the caprice of society, but the Vedas revealed, or rather, unveiled, at the beginning of every Kalpa, by the creator, and transmitted down to posterity by Rishis मन्त्रद्रष्टारः the seers of Mantras.

Western Savants are never happy until they have labelled every Oriental book they come across, with some date, B. C. or A. D., and have done with it. They have never been remarkable for adducing cogent authority for their conjectures. So, to Vedas, and to other Oriental books, they have been ready

to find some random date, relying mostly on some flimsy guesses, the object and the tendency being to bring down our ancient books to modern times and show them to have been within the pale of Alexandrian or Christian influence. Among these Savants, the superficial section indulge in a language of contempt too, representing the Vedas as "Babblings of child-humanity," as " the work of primitive shepherds celebrating the praises of their gods as they led their flocks to the pasture." On the other hand, true scholars have given handsome testimony of an opposite character, lavishly and cordially. One scholar (Guigault) says, " The Rig Veda is the most sublime conception of the great high-ways of humanity."

Max Muller says, " In the history of the world, the Veda fills a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill." He says further, " I maintain that to everybody who cares for himself for his ancestors, for his history, for his intellectual development, a study of Vedic literature is indispensable." The works of Professor Barth (Barth's Religions of India) are instructive on this point.

Sri Madhva's view is (note ; in this respect he differs even from Sri Ramanuja) that the whole body of Vedas including the so-called Karma Kânda and Gnana Kânda and the Upanishads, treats of Brahman, and that every syllable is an attribute of God. He says that there is but one God, Vishnu and Vishnu alone treated of throughout the limitless length of the Vedas. It may be seen that various are the names used in the Vedas Indra, Varuna, Agni, Soma, and so on. It may also be seen that in adoring every one of them, the adjectives used are those applicable to the

Supreme Being only. There can be no doubt therefore that it is the Supreme Being alone that is worshipped throughout, under various names. The first Adhyaya of the Brahma Sootras, consisting of four sub-sections expounds this view that the various names used in the Vedic literature denote and connote Brahman alone, as the context and other canons of construction unmistakably establish in every case. This is further rendered clear by the explanation that the quality making Indra, for instance, what he is, viz., Power (Aiswarya) can possibly apply primarily to the Supreme Being alone who is of limitless power, and only secondarily, to Indra and others of limited power. So with other attributes misappropriated by inferior gods and men. Therefore the excellences referred to in the Vedas, are, all of them without any exception, predicated only of Brahman *alias* Vishnu. Such, in brief, is the broad summary of the first Adhyaya of the Bâdarâyana Sootras.

To all those who are anxious to secure Release, freedom from the bondage of births and deaths, the injunction of the Vedas runs thus :

आत्मावारेद्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः ।

"Brahman should be seen, should be heard, should be cogitated and doted upon". Such is the command, and the command emphatically implies that God is knowable.

CHAPTER XI.

PRAVRITTI MARGA.

THE PATH OUTWARD BOUND.

Whence are we and whither do we tend? This is a question that has agitated innumerable minds in the past, and it is bound to upset minds without number in the future. It has robbed many a thinker of peace of mind, and driven many more to the verge of despair.

In the life of Percy Bysshe Shelley the great poet, it is recorded that he tried, once at least, to commit suicide, out of an irrepressible curiosity to find out what it is that lies beyond death. He was one of those great mystics of the world who gave up their thoughts to ideation, who were madly agitated over the riddle of life, and who worried themselves incessantly about the origin of man and his destination. He had every blessing that should make up the fill of man's happiness, a genius that was the envy of Europe, a wife that strewed his life with love and roses, and friends who extended to him a platonic devotion. Yet he was not happy. He was philosophising deeply and profoundly over the question "whence are we, whither do we tend?

What is the meaning of this, that a thinker should go so mad as to attempt suicide for finding out the why and whither of man. If we reflect over it, we may realise that there was, after all, nothing abnormal about Shelley. Every one of us is sometimes deeply vexed about the strange mysteries amongst which we live, move, and have our being.

The profoundest study of man is himself, so absorbing is the interest it is calculated to evoke.

Can unaided reason solve the mystery? I fear not. It seems to me that nothing short of Inspiration or Revelation can lift the veil. It is not given to Reason alone unaided by the Inspired Word to draw the veil and discover the bright face of true knowledge. None but an Avatar or Messiah can bring peace and solace to man, perplexed, as he is, by the conflicting currents of speculating thought. Sri Madhva was an Avatar, and his answer to the great question satisfied thousands of men in his day, and his message was handed down as a priceless legacy to posterity. He conceived of God's relation to man and the universe in a manner that appealed home to common-sense and stood the test of religious life. In his system, soul and matter (Jeeva and Prakriti) are parallel lines that never merge in one another. God is the string that runs through both, and is the great agent that connects them and dissociates them, at his pleasure. There is no merger or unification between God, Jeeva, and the Achit principles. What we understand by creation, then, is that God furnishes to each Jeeva a coating of gross matter and launches him on the great ocean to fulfil the great journey. He gives each Jeeva a chance of compassing his Salvation by repeated incarnations. God's creation does not mean bringing something out of nothing, but yoking the soul to a form of matter and sending him about his business.

During an inconceivably long period spoken of as Maha Pralaya, the great dissolution, the universe lies imbedded in a subtle primordial chaos

in the womb of Narayana. It is the night when all activity, all animation, lies suspended. in the Father's womb, a night as long in duration as the day of 36,000 Kalpas during which the universe was in active motion. During this long night, all name and form remain submerged, the three gunas lie quiet from balanced equilibrium, and all effects sleep in the causal condition. It is a thorough calm of the Unmanifest sleeping away in Narayana. It is the period of incubation and of much-needed rest, of preparation for the next great out-put of creation. Not a soul, not an atom, shoots up its head, no Brahma, no Indra, none of the gods, is in evidence. All, all, is in trance; the senses utterly inactive, and matter utterly motionless; the totality of Jeevas is in a state of special contact with the Lord, knowing no pain, no misery, at all. The Rig Veda, Mandala X No. 129, describes the state in the following words:

" In the beginning there was
Neither Non-Being, nor Being
No realm of air, nor sky beyond;
What then enshrouded all things?
Where were they?
What gave them shelter?
Was the ocean there,
The unfathomable depths of water?
Death was not there, nor aught immortal
No sign was there, day and night divider,
One Being only, the Existent One,
Breathed calmly, all containing
Nought else than Him was there
Nought else, above, beyond.

Deep gloom was there, all concealed in darkness
Shrouded in nothingness, the One lay void
A chaos, formless, indiscriminate."

At the approach of dawn, a slight stir disturbs the calm as a preparation for the succeeding day. Would that the Pralaya, the calm, lasted for ever! For, the stir of the dawn means the prelude to another long waking day of millions upon millions of years. When it is day-break, it is time for the Jeeva to return to consciousness, and start with all his kitten of buried experiences tied to his back. It is the signal for him to don a fresh garment in the shape of a new body, and march out of the Father's womb about his business as a wanderer (Samsarin) upon the great journey of life and death. Weary with the load he has to carry, sick at heart with the recollection of the past that knows no beginning, the unreleased Jeeva should prepare himself, there being no other alternative, to play his part in the economy of animated nature.

When the great tortoise involuntarily projects its limbs out of the shell or draws them in, the limbs themselves can raise no protest and offer no resistance. When the spider puts forth its coil of thread and draws it in at its pleasure, the thread itself cannot set up a rebellion. This is just what is happening.

॥ यथोर्णनाभिस्सृजते गृण्हते च यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयस्संभवन्ति ।
यथा सतः पुरुषात्केशलोमानि तथाक्षरात्संभवतीहविश्वं ॥

" As the spider sends forth and retracts its web, as in the earth, herbs grow, as from a man the hairs of the head and body, so from the indestructible, the universe becomes." When the night is drawing to a close, a chorus resounds the praise of the Lord, set up

by Lakshmi. The Veda hymns His greatness, praises His name and sports, and prays unto Him to awake.

The Lord wills again, "I will multiply", and sets the ball rolling. With Him, will is effort, effort is action, and action is accomplishment. He engages in creation, sustenance, and dissolution, with no end in view, no purpose to achieve, no gain or benefit to derive. His work entails no loss of energy, no exertion at all, in the out-put. It is spontaneity pure and simple, compared to the exuberant sports of a lunatic, his inebriated song and gambols provoked by a simple overflow of spirits. The Brahma Sootra says ॥लोकवत्तुलीलाकैवल्यं॥ "It is mere sport, as we often observe in the world."

At the will to multiply, the Lord takes form as Vâsudeva. Then he becomes Sankarashana, then Pradyumna, and then, Anirudha. The Chaos of Pralaya emerges from nebulosity slowly, and by degrees gets filled with shapes more and more tangible, under the stress and touch of the Lord's Avatars. By the time that Anirudha begins his work, creation has assumed a shape. Hence, it is called a *Sthoolasristi.* Out of Anirudha's navel, a lotus emanates over the waters and opens its petals to discover the four-faced Brahma. There he sits on the lotus, stunned by the situation, his memory a blank, looking about vacantly, and not realising or recollecting anything for the moment. An unseen voice bids him at this juncture to meditate. 'Tapa' 'Tapa' is the voice that sets him a-thinking. He at once plunges into the waters and meditates. His search is rewarded at last by the vision of the great Purusha appearing before him. This interview is the starting point of further creation. The four-faced

Brahma is bidden to engage in creation and evolve forms in repetition of those that lived and died during the previous Mahâkalpa.

The same ideas are set forth in Manu in the following manner;

सोभिध्यायशरीरात्स्वात्सिसृक्षुर्विविधाःप्रजाः
अपएवससर्जादौतासु वीर्यमवासृजत् ॥
तदण्डमभवद्धैमं सहस्रांशुसमप्रभं ।
तस्मिन्जज्ञेस्वयं ब्रह्मासर्वलोकपितामहः ॥

"Having meditated, and desiring to produce various things from His own body, He first put forth waters, and in these, He placed the seed. That became a golden egg equal in radiance to the thousand-eyed sun. In that, was born Brahma himself, the grand sire of all the worlds."

The outline of material evolution has been explained in a previous chapter. It is therefore needless to go into those details here. Our purpose now is to follow the fortune of the outgoing Jeeva and gather together some ideas about his tour, what heckles and fetters him, what are the conditions of his bondage and of his restricted liberty, what are his equipments, and what the purpose of his wandering.

During the whole of the Mahâpralaya, the unreleased soul lay asleep like a foot-ball after a vigorous game. He lay quiescent with the myriads of bruises caused by the kicks received in the countless births already suffered, the quintessence of Karmic experiences that knocked and dashed him wildly about from pillar to post, times without number. He is now kicked out again into the field to receive

fresh knocks and obtain new shapes, and try to get to the goal, if possible.

The reader may conceive for a moment the vastness of the cycle that I have been calling as *day* and *night*. It is the huge wheel of time कालचक्र wielded by Narayana. It consists of 100 years of Brahma's life. Each year thereof consists of 360 days, and each day consists of Krita, Treta, Dwapara, and Kali ages, added together and multiplied 994 times. Resolved into human years,

Krita Yuga lasts for ...	1,72,8000 years
Treta	1,08,0000 years
Dwapara...	72,0000 years
Kali	36,0000 years
	3,88,8000 years

making up three millions, 888 thousand years. The four Yugas taken together constitute a single age of the gods. 71 Divine ages make up a Manwantara. Fourteen Manwantaras make up a Kalpa. This is but a day for Brahma, the four-faced. 100 years or 36000 Kalpas result in a Mahapralaya of equal duration.

Indras, Manus, and Rishis, change at the end of every Manwantara. Deluges of minor destruction take place at the end of every Kalpa (14 Manwantaras). It is these deluges that are vaguely remembered by almost every nation on the globe. It is to this that tradition refers, a tradition found recorded among Egyptians, Jews, Christians, Hindus, and Asiatics generally, telling a story of Noah's ark or some vessel

saved in the floods with archtypes of creation. Hindu books give elaborate accounts of these interim deluges. It is then that Vishnu descended as Matsya, the great fish, and saved King Satyavrata in a vessel.

It may thus be seen that the great wheel of Mahapralaya and Maha Kalpa has millions of smaller ones, wheel within wheel, rotating at the propulsion of the Supreme Spirit in the centre of all, the processes of nature taking place right through in rotations. For instance, to begin with, the day known to us is measured by the earth revolving once round its axis and returning to the point it started from. The month represents another such process, with reference to the moon's circuit. So does the year, with reference to the earth going round the sun. It is throughout the same orderly rotation, a given point starting off and coming round to its original position in a given time. The seed of a tree sprouts, grows, fructifies, and reverts to be a seed. The rain-drop descends to the ocean, evaporates, and becomes a rain drop in the clouds again, to descend once more. The mountain gets ground, particle by particle, into fine sand, reaches the ocean, and is thrown up, solidified again, by a commotion in the bowels of the earth. So, man too starts out of germs, and goes back to germs. What we call death or destruction is the reversion, the transformation, into the causal state.

Upon the wheels big and small in ceaseless rotation, which embrace every phenomenon of the universe within their sweep, the jeeva is whirled, round and round, rapidly carried from one wheel to another, from birth to death, and death to birth, millions of times. There are several causes at work to keep him

a close prisoner within the grinding wheels. During his bondage, the one thing that he does not realise is, that he is a dependent being and that his simple duty is to love God with all his heart and rely on Him absolutely. He believes himself a free agent, relies on himself to be deluded by the will-o'-the-wisp, and continues the bond-slave of Samsâra.

सर्वाजीवे सर्वसंस्थे बृहन्ते तस्मिन्हंसो भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रे ।
पृथगात्मानं प्रेरितारंच मत्वा जुष्टस्ततस्तेनामृतत्वमेति ॥

SWETASWATARA, I-6.

"On that immense Brahman wheel, the source of life and death for all, the individual soul rotates, revolves deluded, so long as he thinks that he is independent and is a free agent. When he relies on Him (Brahman), he becomes immortal." The 2nd line may also be rendered thus, "when the Jeeva realises that he is different from Atma (the Lord), and that the inspirer of all action is the Lord, he (Jeeva) attains immortality, being blessed by the Lord."

The causes that forge the fetters of the Jeeva are summed up in our books to be the following; (1) The will of God (Iswarecha), (2) Avidya, (3) Kâma Karma, (4) Linga Sarira, (5) the mind called त्रिगुणात्मकमनः (6) Sthoola Sarira. God's will is the greatest operating cause to keep us in bondage. "यमैवेषवृणुते तेनलभ्य :" "Whomsoever he blesses, by him is the goal attained." Nescience that obstructs the spiritual communion with God is also a powerful factor in tightening our chains. Linga Sarira comprising the eleven principles of subtle matter and the five breaths, is our jailor right through. Our release and liberty consists in exploding this husk of coating and casting it away. Of the great grip with which Kâma Karma squeezes us

as in an iron vice, a few words will be said later on. Our great effort should be directed to roast the seeds of Karma.

Thus bound hand and foot by many a jailor, the Jeeva is cast upon a wide, wide, ocean with a bit of free will and a manual of Vedic laws to guide him as a mentor, if he choose to accept its wisdom. In the Krita Yuga, the Jeeva finds great facilities for spiritual advancement. Just as conditions of climate, sanitation, temperature, and so on, invigorate us so, in the golden age, the environments physical, mental, and moral, are highly exhilarating.

There is a very instructive chapter in Baba Bharati's book "Sri Krishna', about the conditions obtaining in the Yugas. The description is a beautiful abridgement of the subject as treated in Shânti Parva, Mahabhârata. The keynote of the golden age, Krita Yuga, is illumination and harmony. The Satwa guna is then predominant throughout. Joy is the very breath of life. Dharma (virtue) lives upon all its four pedestals. Nature is transparent as a glass and holds its inmost secrets revealed to public gaze. This is very probably the millenium spoken of in the western scriptures, the long-forgotten age of bliss to which, even now, man's memory clings, as if led by instinct. Life is lived, in this age, deep in the mind, deep in the heart, and deep in the soul. It is an age of overwhelming spirituality and universal brotherhood. The play of passions and excesses is conspicuous by its absence. Men and women grow to great heights. They are 21 cubits, about 32 feet, normally. Beauty, symmetry, and light, make up their persons. The climate is changeless spring, always sweet and bracing. The perfect harmony between men and the weather,

makes houses and clothing quite superfluous. There is neither sunstroke nor chill to be guarded against. Nor is there the remotest tinge or trace of improper thought to give birth to shame and delicacy. Animals too share the common exhilaration of Satwa. In keeping with the general level of illumination, they are able to think and speak also. The so-called legends in our books that birds and animals used to converse with men are really no fables at all, if they did so in this age. This Yuga is the reflections of Sathyaloka, reproducing its conditions as far as may be. It lasts for about three million years. Gold is the chief element found in plenty.

Treta the next age may be called the 'silver age'. Virtue lives then on three legs. There is a very imperceptible decline of spirituality. Rajo Guna asserts itself gradually. The average human height is 21 feet, and the average longevity, 10,000 years.

Dwapara is an age of still further decline. It is sometimes called 'the copper age' Virtue exists on two legs only. Men are 10½ feet high. They live as long as there is blood in the body. Gold and silver are rarer and dearer than before.

The last age is the Kali Yuga known also as the 'iron age,' the one we are living in. Tamas (darkness) is the characteristic ruler of the period. We all know that spirituality is a rarity. Now, men and women are mere dwarfs. Disharmony is the keynote of society and of nature. It is needless to elaborate this.

A careful study of the laws governing the evolution of the individual soul and its bodies opens our eyes to

realise the wisdom of God and His impartiality in respect to his creatures. It is not unusual for those who have not a full grasp of the ' Law of Karma' to denounce the Supreme Being as partial. We no doubt find the world filled with inequalities. We find a distribution of the world's goods in glaring disproportion and inequality. We find monopolies of strength, health, and vigour, joys, all heaped on one side, miseries set apart on the other. One man is a genius, another is an idiot. One is a millionaire, and another licks his dust in grovelling poverty. So it is, everywhere. Philosophers naturally ask, why should it be so if God be just and merciful ?

There is no doubt whatever that God is just and merciful. Sri Madhva says that God punishes and rewards according to the Jeeva's merits. There is the great fund of Karma which is of every Jeeva's own accumulating, that determines merit and demerit, and its appropriate consequence. God has one uniform Law for all. He tests every body with the same weights and measures. He has therefore no favourite, no bias, and no malice, in dispensing favours or meting out punishments. Before we launch upon a tirade against the so-called idiosyncracies of God, it will be important for us to remember that when we are born, we bring with us a few tendencies inherent or acquired, and it is these that determine our career and destiny. The first of these is the inherent nature of the soul. Some Jeevas are Satwic by nature, others Rajasic, and others again, Tamasic. This is a constant factor not liable to be modified or eradicated. Intense study, deep meditation, rigid penance, might remove super-incumbent crusts and over-growths, but not transform inherent tendencies. These are

woven into the framework of the Jeeva. This idea is no doubt unpalatable to many as it presents a rather pessimistic outlook in regard to a section of souls. Sri Madhva thinks that the disparities of life are not fully explicable without a fundamental basis of division like this. Karma may solve many a difficulty ; but then, the question will remain why one Jeeva should show a pronounced leaning towards good Karma alone, and another to its opposite. Sri Madhva's view is that inherent tendency स्वभाव determines pre-dispositions in the first instance, deflects the magnetic needle of Karma according to its own current, and gives the initial turn to the career

The next heritage of the individual soul is what has been so often referred to as Karma. It is not easy to give a terse definition of this word. It is a somewhat complex idea and has to be analysed. Its literal import is action, but it embraces all desires, thoughts, and activities, within its sphere. The law of Karma regulates the sequence of events, and governs causes and effects. There is no cause and no effect that falls not within its influence, its purview, and jurisdiction.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda (Page 46 "Speeches & writings") "the soul is like a tiny boat in a tempest raised one moment on the foaming crest of a billow and dashed down into a yawning chasm the next, rolling to and fro at the mercy of good and bad actions—a powerless, helpless, wreck in an ever-raging, uncompromising, current of cause and effect,—a little moth placed under the wheel of causation which rolls on crushing everything in its way and waits not for the widow's tears or the orphan's cry." The moth

thus placed under the wheel of causation is, so far as any freedom is allowed to it, incessantly engaged in a search for happiness. This is the root motive of all action. As the Advanced Text Book has it, (Page 309) "every man, boy and girl wants to be happy. They seek happiness in many different ways, but they all seek happiness. The Jeeva blinded by his body chooses the wrong things very often, but the motive of his choice is always the same, the desire to be happy. It is his nature to be happy and he is always trying to express his nature. Through the whole of his long pilgrimage, he is searching for happiness. This is his root motive, the object at which he invariably aims. If he does a painful thing, it is in order to gain a greater happiness. Happiness is his end, everything else is only a means to that end. The whole of evolution may be described in the words "a search for happiness."

Those who are engaged in what is known as Pravritti Marga, the path outward bound, seek happiness in the senses. They are sportsmen driving the chariot of ten horses (10 senses) in pursuit of game. They use mind as the charioteer, and impel this devoted servant to drive the horses through thick and thin into the jungle of sensuous pleasures. They may catch a few bubble-like joys or they may not. Anyhow, it is a hot game they are engaged in, and in quest of happiness.

Of the sheaths mentioned *supra*, the reader may find Kâma Karma as one of the number. This is the power-station which supplies steam for the activities of this sportsman. The zest with which the chase after sensual pleasure is kept up is supplied by (Kâma) desire. All our Karma is the offspring of desire. It

is desire that draws the Jeeva to an object. Attachment (Abhimana) is created thereby and a bondage is established. This leads to thought, to a cogitation of means for achieving the end. This again guides the Jeeva to the requisite action. Icha, Gnana, and Kriya are thus the threefold functions engaged in the pursuit of pleasures. Desire, thought, and action, constitute the triple chord that binds down the individual soul. Heaps of desires, thoughts, and actions, are thus laid by, day by day, and hour by hour, by every Jeeva, every one of which, is a Karmic seed liable to germinate, and subject the Jeeva to tens or hundreds of incarnations.

Our books speak of this accumulated stock as Sanchita Karma. If it consist of good actions, it is a stock-in-trade of which we may feel some pride. If it comprise bad actions, it is the ballast that will sink us in the abyss. Good or bad, the Sanchita Karma is our guiding genius for good or evil, a guide that holds us in leading strings, that shadows our movement at every pace, and dogs our steps whether we be waking or dreaming. Out of this fund, a few that are developed and mature form the Prarabdha Karma of the Jeeva. These are the ripe seeds that have begun to germinate. It is Prarabdha Karma selected out of Sanchita, that forms the proximate cause of the ensuing births and experiences. The country, nationality, race, caste, creed, and society, in which he is to be born, is determined by Prarabdha. The Karma of the parent and that of the offspring determines the relation by mutual affinity. The last thought, for instance, of the dying man, some prominent wish in his mind while *in extremis* brings on a birth suitable thereto. This is the reason why suicide is so strongly condemned

in our books as worse than murder, for, of all Karma seeds, the motive for self-destruction is the most powerful Karma-seed imaginable. The shock is one so forcibly and deeply cut into the soul, that it forms a powerful, dominating, Prarabdha for a series of births, in all of which the man is likely to end his days by suicide without any ostensible reason. As Baba Bharati puts it (page 224) 'Sri Krishna', "Man is the conscious embodiment of the blended forces of his past actions, actions of previous conscious embodiments born of the forces of still more previous embodiments."

Whatever Prarabdha has commenced to bear fruit, it must run out its course. Even the saint that has visioned God cannot help experiencing the fruits, and undergoing the inevitable suffering and enjoyments.

As the soul continues to enjoy and suffer, it does other actions which are additions to the stock. The current Karma, whose fruits of course are in the future, is called Varthamana (present) or Âgâmi (future).

The sage who has seen God, has the Sanchita burnt up and the Âgami-supply prevented and cut off. He has only the Prarabdha to deal with, and even as to this, God shows him concessions. There is thus no possibility of escaping from the grip of Karma except by the grace of the Almighty.

The law of Karma as understood by Hinduism is not predestination. 'Karma' does not smother freedom of will and reduce man into a machine. The law of Karma is like any other law of nature laying down the limitations incidental to action. Just as the law of gravitation, for example, imposes no command

upon anybody to climb a hill or descend a slope but simply lays down the rule that whosoever wishes to ascend must be prepared for fatigue and, *vice versa*, so the law of Karma lays down the relation and sequence of cause and effect. Human will is free to choose means and ends, notwithstanding the law; only, it cannot sow thistles and expect to reap a harvest of corn.

If therefore a man makes his desires noble, he lays by good Karma, forms useful habits, and builds a noble character. In this sense, subject of course to his inherent nature and the Divine will, every man is the architect of his own destinies. The law of Karma is thus no destroyer of ethical foundations, for, it does not deprive man of free will and moral responsibility. Impelled and directed by Kâma Karma among other forces, the Jeeva takes on one kind of body after another in the progress of evolution.

Aaitareya Âranyaka has the following account of evolution :

" ओषधिवनस्पतिषु हि रसो दृश्यते। चित्तं प्राणभृत्सु। प्राणभृत्सु-त्वेवाविस्तरामात्मा। तेषु हि रसोपि दृश्यते। न चित्तमितरेषु। पुरुषेत्वेवावि-स्तरामात्मा। स हि प्रज्ञानेन संपन्नतमः। विज्ञातं वदति। विज्ञातं पश्यति। वेद्श्वस्तनं। वेद्लोकालोकौ। मर्त्येनामृतमीप्सति। एवंसपन्नः। अथेतरेषां पशूनामशनापिपासे एवाभिज्ञानं। नविज्ञातं वदन्ति। न विज्ञातं पश्यन्ति। न विदुःश्वस्तनं। नलोकालोकौ। तएतावन्तो भवन्ति यथा प्रज्ञं हि संभवाः॥ "

"In herbs and trees rasa (sap-life) is seen, and mind in them that have Prana. In them that have Prana, Atma is more manifest. In them rasa is seen, while mind is not seen in the others. In man, the Atma is most manifest. He is most supplied with knowledge.

He speaks that which he knows. He knows what occurred yesterday. He knows the visible and the invisible : by the mortal, he desires the immortal. Thus supplied is he, but of the others, animals, hunger and thirst are the only knowledge. They speak not the known. They see not the known; they known not what belongs to yesterday nor the visible and the invisible : only this much have they ; according to the knowledge are the births." Herein is a lucid exposition of the gradation in the march of progress.

We have seen in a previous chapter that matter is summed up in 24 principles, from Mahat to the elementals. (Ether, etc.) These are the components of every atom. Jeeva encased in an atom of dust, finds that his prison has no doors and windows. He finds that the passages are all closed and barred against the sense-objects. He longs for passages being opened, so that he might sense the external world. Under the pressure of desire, gratification follows. The mineral body develops into a blade of grass, where but a single passage remains opened, viz., touch. The blade of grass has feeling and draws sap. It is all stomach and no more. Under the stress of desire, evolution leads the Jeeva higher and higher until he passes through varieties of plant-life and animal-life. When he is an animal such as a dog, his life is entirely in the senses. When he is a monkey or an ape, all the passages are open exeept love, Budhi (discrimination), and the higher manas. Standing on the verge and broders of humanity, the ape has well-developed instincts and automatic memory, though *reasoning and hope* are not yet manifest. In man, all the 24 principles have appropriate openings and passages. Hence it is that he is a perfect miniature of the Universe.

This evolution of form—an evolution on the material plane—is to be carefully distinguished from the inner evolution of the spirit. There is in fact a double evolution proceeding apace, on both the planes. The one on the plane of matter is the theme of Darwinian science. The law of heredity is the exponent of this evolution.

The Jeeva is, by his desires and actions, perpetually adding to his knowledge and developing his powers. He is by the same methods acquiring higher and higher forms. The parent of his body supplies his body with tendencies and capacities; to these he adds his own fund of character, and makes further progress on both the lines.

Our books have a very clear grasp of the material and spiritual progress that is implied by animalism elevated to humanity, by the growth of the savage man into the civilised man, of the civilised man to the religious man, and of the religious man to the spiritual man. Millions of incarnations are passed through, in the course of this transformation.

Thus, on the physical plane, there is an unbroken continuity of forms more and more developed, from the lowest step of animal life to the highest stage of man. The law of transmigration postulates the continuity of consciousness necessary for self-evolution, for the progress of mental and moral individuality. These two developments coupled together account for the full evolution of man. As in the physical, so in the mental, moral, and spiritual planes, evolution goes on in an endless chain of developments, nothing being lost and annihilated.

George Du. Maurier has a beautiful description of the goal of life, which is well worth quoting. "Nothing is lost, nothing, from the ineffable, high, fleeting thought a Shakspeare cannot find words to express,—to the slightest sensation of an earth-worm: not a leaf's feeling of light, not a lodestone's sense of the pole, not a single volcanic or electric thrill of the mother Earth.

'"The sun rains life on to the mother Earth. A poor little life it was, at first, as you know, grasses and moss and little wriggling transparent things. All stomach, it is quite true; that is what we came from, Shakspeare and you and I. As far as I can make out, everything, everywhere, seems to be an ever-deepening, ever-broadening, stream that makes with inconceivable velocity for its own proper level, where perfection is: only, that, unlike an earthly stream, and more like a fresh flowing tide up an endless, boundless, shoreless, creek, the level it seeks is immensely higher than its source, and everywhere in it, is Life, Life, Life, ever renewing and doubling itself, and ever swelling that mighty river which has no banks.

"And everywhere in it, like begets like, plus a little better or a little worse, and the little worse finds its way into some back-water and sticks there, and finally goes to the bottom and nobody cares. And the little better goes on bettering and bettering: Not all man's folly or perverseness can hinder that, nor make that headlong torrent stay or ebb or roll backward for a moment. The record goes on beating itself, the high-watermark gets higher and higher, till the highest on earth is reached that can be, and then, I suppose the earth grows cold and the sun goes out to be broken up into bits and used all over again perhaps. And better-

ness flies to warmer climes, and huger systems; to better itself still: And so on, from better to better, from higher to higher, from warmer to warmer, and bigger to bigger, for ever and ever and ever. Endless chain, we, Shakespeare and all: Just a little way behind us, those wriggling transparent things, all stomach that we descend from; and far a-head of ourselves, but in the direct line of descent from us, an ever-growing conscious power, so strong, so glad, so simple, so wise, so mild, and so beneficent, that what we can do even now is but to fall on our knees with our foreheads in the dust and our hearts brimful of wonder, hope and love, and tender shivering awe.

" As we sow, we reap; all the sowing is done here on earth and the reaping beyond. Man is a grub. His dead clay as he is coffined in his grave, is the left off cocoon he has spun for himself during his earthly life to burst open and soar from, with all his memories about him." '

The chief concern of man is to see that he sows proper seeds and reaps a good harvest. It is his look-out to march from better to still better, to progress ever onward and never to retrograde, stagnate, or deteriorate. It is his duty to catch sight of the great Power in the yonder horizon, and fall on his knees to lick the dust in reverence, awe, and love. It should be his aim to turn from the senses and be free from earthly desires.

That soul is bound which is tied to desire, attached to objects, and, is in quest of mundane pleasures. Such a one knows not God, but has its face turned away from Him. At each step, it drags a lengthening chain from the Almighty and rivets the bondage by adding, day after day, fresh links to the chain. It is a

precipitate descent that the rash traveller is engaged in. The farther he proceeds, the more forcibly does he gravitate towards the abyss, with the ever-growing load of Karma set upon his back. This path is known in the Shastras as Pravritti Marga, the path, outward bound. Its aims and fruits are *Dharma, Artha and Kama.* It is set in opposition to Nivritti Marga which leads to Moksha or release.

CHAPTER XII.

RITUALISM.

Every religious system has its philosophy, its Purânas, and its ritualism. The philosophy offers a reasoned theory of the Universe. The Puranas tell stories of saints, sages, prophets and Avatars, so as to illustrate, elucidate, and concretize, the philosophical teachings. They convey the truths of the system by allegories, history, traditions and legends, in a way appealable to the understanding of the many. The ritual is symbology whose object and effect is, among others, to make religious life appeal strongly to the senses and get assimilated into the automatic habits of men and women.

Sri Madhva wrote numerous works of philosophy. Next, he wrote an epitome of the Mahabharata, re-telling the story of the great epic in a succint and connected narrative, so as to bring out the hidden moral and spiritual lessons, vividly. This volume is at once a remarkable summary and commentary of the Mahabharata, lucidly setting out how the teachings of the great epic convey and emphasize the Mâdhva doctrines, and how Sri Krishna and Bheeshma the great teachers of the day taught religion and duty as Dualists understand the terms. This and similar works of Sri Madhva are the volumes of his concretized philosophy. Thirdly, Sri Madhva wrote also some works to regulate and codify the ritualistic observances of his disciples and followers. The well-known Sadâchâra Smriti, Krishnâmirita Mahârnava, Jayanti Nirnaya, and Tantrasara etc., are short codes dealing with the daily and occasional duties

and rites of Madhvas, and with the symbology of their religious life.

Sri Madhva was a staunch upholder of caste. He believed in it as the foundation of Hindu religion and polity, as the bed-rock on which the moral and religious edifice of mankind should be built. He allowed no relaxation of its rigidity and sympathised with no deviation from its imperious laws. He saw in the institution nothing but the highest wisdom, and did his best to define, regulate, and fix, the demarcations and landmarks, with clearness and sharpness. I have no space or inclination to enter the field of controversy regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the caste system and the part it has played in India. Opinions are naturally divided very sharply over the question. Caste has had its warmest admirers and its bitterest detractors. While Christian missionaries have condemned it as the bane of India, Theosophists and Oriental scholars, have belauded it as a perfection of social legislation. Amongst the mass of literature pro and con, the testimony of one writer is worth quoting, for he is a hostile witness, one who does not see anything great in ancient or modern India, and who is the author of a thick volume of misrepresentation and malice about Indian manners, customs, and ceremonies. This is Abbe Dubois, who lived in Southern India for many years, towards the end of the 18th century. He says (page 28) " I believe caste division to be in many respects, the *Chef-d'oeuvre*, the happiest effort of Hindu legislation. I am presuaded that it is simply and solely due to the distribution of the people into castes that India did not lapse into a state of barbarism, and that she preserved and perfected the arts and sciences of civilization, whilst most other nations of the earth

remained in a state of barbarism. Such an institution was probably the only means that the most clear-sighted prudence could devise for maintaining a state of civilization.

"We can picture what would become of the Hindus if they were not kept within the bounds of duty by the rules and penalties of castes, by looking at the position of Pariahs or outcastes of India, who, checked by no moral restraint, abandon themselves to their natural propensities. For my part, being perfectly familiar with this class, and acquainted with its natural predilections and sentiments, I am persuaded that a nation of Pariahs left to themselves would speedily become worse than the hordes of cannibals who wander in the vast wastes of Africa, and would soon take to devouring each other.

"These ancient law-givers, therefore, being well aware of the danger caused by religious and political innovations, and being anxious to establish durable and inviolable rules for the different castes composing the Hindu nation, saw no surer way of attaining their object than by combining, in an unmistakable manner, those great foundations of orderly government, religion and politics. Accordingly, there is not one of their ancient usages, not one of their observances, which has not some religious principle or object attached to it. The style of greeting, the mode of dressing, the cut of clothes, the shape of ornaments and their manner of adjustment, the various details of the toilette, the architecture of houses, the corners where the hearth is placed and where the cooking pots must stand, the manner of going to bed and of sleeping, the forms of civility and politeness that must be observed, all these are severely regulated." Scores of similar

opinions justifying caste may be cited, but it is hardly necessary.

Sri Krishna says:

'चातुर्वर्ण्यंमयासृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः' ॥

BAGAVAT GEETA II.

"I created the four castes by classifying men according to their character and action." The fourfold division of caste is thus of God's creation. Therefore, Sri Madhva believed in it, implicitly. The end and aim of all our symbols, castemarks, image-worship, and Nama Sankeertans, as well as all the rites we perform, is Bhakti. Ritualism is only the lower stage of Bhakti, the training school of mental and moral drill, in which every man should undergo a rigid discipline to bring his senses under control and acquire the 'one-pointed concentration' indispensable for salvation. The ritual may look like a shell devoid of vitality. But it is really not so. Ostensibly, it may look a mere fossil. But it is, in truth, a nutrition for the tender, growing, plant of spirituality. Let us see what it consists of.

With a laconic brevity hardly appropriate for the subject, the District Manual of South Canara sums up Sri Madhva's injunctions in three words. It says that '*Ankana*' *Namakarana* and '*Bhajana*' constitute the sum total of Mâdhva observances. A brief gloss adds that 'Ankana' is marking the body with symbols, especially *hot iron.* A foreigner unacquainted with Indian customs, is not likely to be particularly edified by the text and the gloss. He will run away with the idea that Mâdhvas are so many savages who undergo a branding-torture

everyday of their lives, and that the practice is one akin to *Satti* and other forms of self-immolation spoken of in weird stories of Indian life. But, as a matter of fact, branding does not exist as an evil, and no legislator or philanthropist need trouble himself to offer succour to save this community.

Hinduism insists on every votary making no secret of his professions, and of exhibiting them, by openly wearing symbols and badges. Every caste, every *ásrama*, and every cult, has its characteristic insignia. It is expected that the Hindu should not be ashamed to own open allegiance to his faith and publicly wear the prescribed marks. English education having shaken Hindu beliefs, has, of late, brought about a kind of double life, by reason of external symbols being adhered to, while the underlying faith has gone. This however is no fault of Hinduism.

These caste marks and badges are highly useful to promote solidarity among the members of the particular brotherhood. They serve as a banner for all co-religionists to recognize one another at a glance and rally together in the name of a common creed. The symbols are, every one of them, instinct with occultism, revealing to the esoteric inquirer, spiritual truths of value. It is difficult to see where the notion of barbarity comes in, when a social or religious guild adopts symbols analogous to masonic watchwords. Some Europeans probably confuse the caste-marks with tattoo pictures in paint introduced into the skin by a process of painful pricking. But the marks in question are merely smeared over the skin, liable to be wiped away by a copious perspiration.

The forehead marks of a Madhwa Brahmin are a perpendicular line of charcoal with a reddish dot at its base. It is not *any* charcoal that is used for the purpose, but only a piece that had been used red-hot for burning incense to the Deity. The dot is a mixture of saffron and chunam whose chemical union produces a reddish paste. The symbol worn on the forehead resembles the stem and bulb of a thermometer set in between two vertical lines of Gopi mud or sandal paste. On the upper arms, the chest, and belly, tracings of Gopi-mud or sandal are prominent, resembling tapering leaves or flames. The central one represents a lotus stalk supporting a flower. On these tracings and upon the temples near the corners of both the eyes, marks of metallic seals, dipped in Gopi-mud are also visible. Just as a Sri Vaishnava is made out by the striking tracings in white and red upon his forehead and in numerous places on the body, and just as Smarthas are made out by horizontal lines of ashes on the said parts, Mâdhwas wear the marks aforesaid so as to be identified beyond mistake. The stamps are the emblems of Vaishnavaism. They represent the weapons of Vishnu. Whenever the Guru on the pontificate throne goes about touring, his followers receive imprints of the metallic seals heated more or less over the fire. At the Upanayana, every father or spiritual guru blesses the young initiate with the imprint, the Gopi-paste being used instead of fire. Sri Vaishnavas too submit to this holy branding at the hands of gurus. With us, the branding is very mild indeed, and occurs at enormous intervals, not more than once or twice in a lifetime, on an average. These *namams* or tracings seem to have been largely in vogue in Canara at, and before, the time of the Master. Men professing Bhâgavata

Sampradayam wear these identical namams, to this day, though they are not Mádhwas. This community of Smarthas is numerically strong in Canara. In faith, they occupy a position midway between Saivites and Vaishnavites, for, they hold Siva and Vishnu to be of equal rank. They do not wear the *mudras* or seals. They officiate as priests in several temples of Siva in that district.

Sri Madhva was probably born in this sect, and therefore inherited the *namams* under consideration. He perpetuated them with the addition of Vaishnava symbols, viz., *mudras.*

It is a cardinal belief of Sri Madhva that the thought of the Supreme Being at the moment of one's death is of the greatest importance to one's spiritual salvation. It is only sages that are capable of it. Ordinary people remain either dazed or think of some mundane object while *in extremis*, and hanker after a sensual pleasure. These are bound to be re-born as salves of that particular desire. Those who think of God at the crisis when life is ebbing away, attain immortality. Such is the strong belief.

With this aim steadily kept in view, the ritualistic code is drawn up so that every thought, word, and act, may be turned towards God. Man is nothing if not a slave of habit. It is of the utmost importance that our activities in the direction of virtue and rectitude should be so drilled as to become automatic. It is of the utmost importance that religious duties should become assimilated into our mental and spiritual framework as mechanical volitions.

When the child begins to walk, every step it puts forward is the result of deliberate volition and

conscious effort. When a lady is learning to play on a piano, she seeks out, by effort, the keys of the note, and exerts herself to lay the finger on the right spot. Soon, the volition becomes mechanical, and effort disappears. The child runs without any thought of the steps: and the lady produces melodious airs without thinking at all of the keys and the fingers. In each case, the will has degenerated into automatic action. Such is the drill of a military soldier. The story goes that a military deserter was once spotted and arrested in a crowd, when the detective simply cried "Attention" at random, and marked its effect among the multitude. The deserter involuntarily responded to the call, while everybody else stood heedless.

The symbols of God are meant to serve as remembrancers of Vishnu, so that the Bhakta may automatically think of Him even when his senses are in disorder, when his brain is dazed or his soul is in a trance.

Another device based on precisely the same end in view is the injunction of "Namakarana." Every Mâdhwa is commanded to name himself, and his kith and kin, by some well-known designation of Vishnu or of his Bhaktas, such as, Hanuman, Bheema, Madhva, and so on. Srimad Bhâgavata points out by means of an episode known as Ajâmilopakhyâna, that, by bestowing Divine names on kith and kin, the spiritual advantage is simply incalculable. It is said that King Ajâmila was a moral and spiritual leper, as far as man could judge him by his apparent character and conduct in life, a veritable monster of depravity. When he was on death-bed, he summoned his son to his side, Narayana

by name. This designation brought the Supreme Being to his mind and paved his way to Heaven.

If we have to call ourselves and others by names, as we undoubtedly must in order to get on in the world, why should we not choose such names as will serve both a religious and a secular purpose? This is the Hindu idea of economy implied in killing two birds with a single stone.

God's name itself is to all Hindus an object of worship. Vishnu, Narayana, Krishna, and names like these, have a magical ring in our ears, kindle noble images in our minds, and are treated as quite unlike other names in the language. Devotees are advised to pronounce such names as often as possible. It is stated that to keep the names even mechanically on the lips, is of immense efficacy. As we walk, as we eat, and as we work, whatever the engagement, whatever the pursuit, the advice is to say 'Rama' or 'Krishna' whenever it may be possible, mechanically or intelligently. God's name is a tongue of spiritual flame that will burn up sins, even if uttered in ignorance.

Chaitanya set the prairies of Bengal and Orissa on fire by the flaming torch of 'Hari Bole.' It was merely the name of Hari that produced the *medæval* Vaishnavaism unparalleled in the history of Northern India. Thousands of men and women went into raptures, and many of them into ecstatic trances, at the resounding echoes of 'Hari.' What is there in a name'? the poet asks. There is in this name, condensed and locked up, a supernatural efficacy that defies analysis. Millions of saints have uttered it and attained the *Summum Bonum*.

Thus the worship of a Divine name is a ritualism of high value. It occupies a pedestal much higher than the ritualism of mechanical symbols.

A little reflection is enough to convince us that words and thoughts are wedded to each other more intimately than we are disposed to concede at first sight. Some people fancy that words are late inventions of humanity, as mere devices and shifts of conventional understandings and agreements. This is a superficial view of the subject. No concept seems possible without words. "Language and thought go hand in hand; where there is as yet no word, there is not yet an idea" says Max Muller. "Thoughts are the inner part and word is the outer part, and they *must* come together: they cannot be separated" says Swami Vivekananda. Max Muller observes, (Page 229 "Life and Religion") "Cannot a concept exist without a word? certainly not; and if it is asked whether the concept exist first, and the sign comes afterwards, I should say, no, the two are simultaneous. But in strict logic, the sign being the condition of a concept, may really be said to come first. After a time, words may be dropped, and it is then when we try to remember the old word that gave birth to our concept, that we are led to imagine that concepts came first and words afterwards. I know how difficult it is to see this clearly. We are so accustomed to think without words that we can hardly realize the fact that originally no conceptual thoughts was possible without these or other signs."

Every name in the Sanskrit language yeilds upon an analysis of roots and suffixes, a rich treasure of attributes such as can dwell in the Almighty alone in perfection. To a

profound scholar, every name such as Indra and Chandra, denotes an excellence appropriate only to the Supreme Being. The thousand names of Vishnu call up likewise, lofty ideas of the Divine greatness. By association, and by etymological import, these names produce flashes of thought, and present the Divine Being before the mental vision. Where then is the absurdity in bowing before the Name?

It is not the Hindu idolators alone that worship names with peculiar reverence. "In the name of the Lord" is a favourite expression in the mouth of Christians and Hebrews, to denote something very solemn and very holy. The Hebrews considered that the Holy name was so holy that it should not be pronounced by ordinary men. "The word was God" is a Biblical saying elevating the divine name to the rank of godhead itself.

It has been seen that we revere certain symbols by wearing them on our persons, and that we revere God's names by bestowing them on kith and kin. What more are we asked to do? We are told to engage in Bhajana. This is the third of the injunctions.

Bhajana is worship, literally. It is the most comprehensive word that sums up our religious duties. It includes every thought, word, and act, pointing to God. It includes self-surrender of every degree, and spiritual aspirations of every shade. It covers the whole field of ritualism from the lowest conceivable fetish to the most etherialised worship of God.

'The worship of forms constitutes our first lesson in this training. We are told so select some idols or images or objects, and invoke God therein by prayers and Mantras. Images that have been long in worship, especially by learned men, enjoy the Divine Presence induced by the superior piety and prayers of the wise. Idols thus charged with divine magnetism, should be secured, and preserved in a reserved chapel. Day after day, we are enjoined to do Puja, in view to religion becoming part and parcel of our life, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone. This routine is in fact observed in most houses. Saligram-stones, metallic or wood images, are set up on a throne, and homage rendered thereto as at the throne of an Emperor. The details comprise a long and elaborate programme The stones and images are bathed with reverence, rubbed dry with cloth, ornamented with flowers, and prayed to with devotion. Bells flowers, sandal, incense, and lights, are used abundantly in the act of worship. The consciousness that it is only an image, is smothered and suppressed. The mind is thus, day after day, drilled into a habit of concentration. Sri Madhva says, as emphatically as words can, that image-worship is meant only for the lowest stage, for the ignorant. **प्रतिमास्वप्रबुद्धानां सर्वत्रविदितात्मनां** are his words at the end of the first Adhyaya of his Sootra Bhashya. They mean that God is to be worshipped in images by the non-wise; as for the learned, they worship God everywhere."

Rising from the stage of idol-worship, the Bhakta is told to adore and worship godly men as constituting walking images of God. Wise men are so many centres of attraction for the Divine Presence.

Lesser men should therefore revere the wise, because, the latter possess God in their hearts in a peculiar sense. Hero-worship is a phenomenon of universal prevalence in human society. It prevails not only in India, but also in advanced Europe and democratic America. There, the hero is deified as a soldier, statesman, philosopher, poet, painter, and so on. The world appreciates and admires everything above the dead level of averages. The worst iconoclast forgets his dogmas and falls at the feet of a lady-love, or bows to wealth and power. He is less than human if he has not a warm corner in his heart for nation-builders and heroes who lay the mile-stones of history.

Among heroes thus adored, the saint is one. The worship of saints is known all over the world. Hundreds of them are deified in every system of religion. Saints are superior beings who may or may not worship selected idols, but worship God in every object of creation and beyond. They are the wise spoken of by Sri Madhva 'as worshipping God everywhere.' Their vision is powerful and strong, and catches sight of God where ours cannot. There is nothing strange about this. As Swami Vivekananda puts it, "an owl, for instance, sees in the dark, because it catches the all-pervading vibrations of light in what is darkness to eyes otherwise constituted." The light-vibration is present everywhere and always, though perhaps in varying degrees of intensity. We catch them at certain pitches and velocities, and other beings do at higher or lower points. Sages and Saints catch sight of the Divinity in states which we call ignorance. God stands revealed to them in forms, though to our weak eyes, He is invisible.

The worship of symbols, names, forms, and godly men, appears to be a psychological necessity of man. Swami Vivekananda says "man may cry against it, struggle against it, but as soon as he attempts to realize God, he will find the constitutional necessity of thinking of God as a man." All thought in fact consists of images. Even the Christian at prayer has only images of man floating in his mind, may be, magnified editions of man, but still human in shape and figure. The Budhas and the Jains who kicked vigorously at the pricks of Theism, ended by setting up more temples of idol-worship in India than any other religionists. The country swarmed with temples of Budha, Sidhas, and Thirthankaras, and in these, idol-worship prevailed to a shocking degree. Even the temple of Jagannath was, it is said, a Budhist temple originally.

It is, no doubt, the fashion for almost every religionist to attack other religions as idolatrous and hold up their symbols to ridicule. It is the old story of the beam in one's own eye being ignored, and the little mote in somebody else's prominently pointed out. Max Muller observes (Page 158, 'Thoughts on life and Religion'): "No Judge, if he had before him the worst of criminals, would treat him, as most historians and theologians have treated the religions of the world. Every act in the lives of their founders, which shows that they were but men, is eagerly seized and judged without mercy. Every doctrine that is not carefully guarded, is interpreted in the worst sense it will bear; every act of worship that differs from our own way of serving God, is held up to ridicule and contempt. And this is not done by accident, but with a purpose,

with something of that artificial sense of duty which stimulates counsel for the defence to see nothing but an angel in his own client and anything but an angel in the plaintiff on the other side. The result is a complete miscarriage of justice."

Abbe Dubois wrote such a book in the last century, about our customs, manners, and religious ceremonies. He was a devout Christian missionary. He exhausted the language of abuse in describing Hindu character and treated the Brahmins in particular to a choice selection of the most opprobrious epithets. His delineation is an outrageous caricature from start to finish, like figures in the Punch, with this difference, that the misdrawn figures are passed off and represented as faithful life-like photographs. Such a misrepresention is possible and easy with regard to any subject, if there be but the will, for, it is only necessary to select oddities and idiosyncrasies, group them in a ludicrous manner, throw in a few inuendos for flavour, and concoct a story of *Suppressio Veri* and *Suggestio falsi.* The skill lies in the selection of topics and the presentment thereof. To the credit of the Abbe, it must be mentioned that he made no secret of his true aim and intention. He frankly tells his readers, "It struck me that a faithful picture of the wickedness and incongruities of polytheism and idolatry would, by its very ugliness, help greatly to set off the beauties and perfections of Christianity. It was thus that the *Lacedoemonians* placed drunken slaves in the sight of their children in order to inspire the latter with horror of intemperance." This passage lets the cat

out of the bag. The intention was obviously to set a hideous figure of India's polytheism and idolatry in the sight of Christians, so as to produce a horror. How well the purpose has been achieved, the readers of the Abbe's stout volume are only too well aware. During a residence of 30 years in the country, and in the course of his arduous studies of the people, the Abbe did not encounter in our religious or secular literature any work more sublime than the fables of Mariada Raman and Panchatantra. He never heard of our Bhâgavatam or Bhagavat Geeta.

Polytheism and idolatry! This is the usual censure. The Vaishnavas who believe in Narayana as the Supreme Being, the only God above the gods, are no polytheists in any sense. They are Unitarians out and out, believing in Monotheism alone.

As for idolatry and superstition, it is hard to light upon any nation in the world which is truly free in this respect. When the Christians say that God descended in the shape of a dove, rather than a cow or a cat, they seriously associate the dove with holiness, and regard themselves as above superstition. When the Hindu associates holiness with the cow, the Christian gets wild with him and calls him a superstitious infidel. Then there is the Cross, held dear and sacred. There is the Church, more sacred than other houses. The attitude in prayer, the mental images worshipped in prayers, the sacrament, these and a host of others too numerous to mention, demonstrate the subtle idolatry and superstition of even the Protestants. The French Abbe of

the Catholic Church was a dweller in glass-houses, who could ill afford to throw stones at others. He believed in images, conducted car festivals of Saint Mary, burnt incense at the altar, used bells and candles in religious service, and indulged in a lot of symbology in aid of private and public worship. He maintained however, "my symbols, names, and forms, are all right. Yours, heresy, blasphemy, and superstition." The Jews who have so much in common with Christians, revere a mere box with angels drawn in paint upon its sides. The Mahomedans whose iconoclasm desolated temples innumerable from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin, and from sea to sea, are no better, examined at close quarters. They broke down Hindu idols without number, but had queer superstitions of their own to take the place of dislodged Hinduism. Here is an instance forcibly pointed out by Swami Vivekananda. The Swami says "The Mahomedan must imagine, whenever he prays, that he is in the temple of Kaba, and when he makes a pilgrimage there, there is a black stone in the wall that he must kiss, and all the kisses that have been imprinted on that stone by millions and millions of pilgrims, will stand up as witnesses for the benefit of the faithful at the last day of judgment. There is the well of Zim Zim. Mahomedans believe that the sins of whomsoever draws a little water of that well will be pardoned, and he will have a fresh body and live for ever after the day of resurrection."

Like the cross and the crescent, the Hindus have various symbols as pegs to hang spiritual ideas upon. On principle, there is no rhyme or reason in

condemning their symbology alone as obnoxious to common-sense. Nor is there the least ground to talk of Mâdhvas in the strain in which the South Canara Manual disposes of their 'Ankana', the terse remark being that they 'brand themselves with *hot iron*'; a statement as erroneous as it is misleading.

CHAPTER. XIII.

NIVRITTI MARGA.

He who keeps the goal steadily in view never misses the true path. The goal is the attainment of God, and the pilgrim should tread the path leading to that goal. Whoever keeps it constantly in sight is bound to tread the path known as Nivritti Marga, the path that leads him inward unto the Dweller of the heart and away from the senses.

In one of her lectures, Mrs. Besant employs a beautiful simile to describe this path. She represents God as dwelling enthroned in a temple on the top of a mountain. This temple has seven enclosures one within another hiding the *sanctum sanctorum* of His Presence. The mountain is *spiral* in shape, very wide at the base, and gradually narrowing up to the temple which is perched on the top. It has millions of winding roads all round, describing circles from the base to the top, each circle broader in circumference than the one just above and leading unto it. The pilgrim that begins the ascent of this gigantic mountain finds the route inordinately long-winded at the foot. He has no idea of the goal, but walks on guided by instinct and intuition. The way is long and rugged, and progress is very slow. Threading the wearisome path by slow marches, he frequently tarries and loiters on the way to pluck a way-side flower or *taste* a little berry at the hedge. He is often tempted to cut across the bye-paths leading into the thickets of the jungle, in quest of some

honey-comb he has seen or imagined, perched on a tree. Forgetting the main road and the purpose of his journey, he takes long rambles for ages together in quest of game and sport. He gets a few pleasures, but is soon satiated, and hunts after others, always with the same result. A sense of weariness comes over him. May be, that he catches the ringing hurrah of other pilgrims who are pursuing the trunk road above him and even gets a glimpse of that road. A faint recollection brings him back from the tangled foot-paths into which he has strayed, and he finds himself once more on the highway. With a resolution not to stray away again, he makes some progress. But soon, he relapses into indifference, for, the goal is still out of sight. The vineyards on the way-side are so attractive that the temptation is irresistible to stray again. When the cheery voice of the advanced fellow-pilgrims is feeble in the ears, he strays again to taste the grapes, and wastes away thousands of births in this manner in digressions and deviations.

As one winding road is thus passed after another, if the pilgrim be a capable mountaineer and stout of heart, he reaches the half-way houses where the bracing spirituality of the mountain-air refreshes and invigorates him. Hereafter, there will be fewer hankerings after sensuous pleasures, less forgetfulness of the prime purpose of the pilgrimage. Thus, proceeding higher and higher, he meets a suffusing glow of light stealing gently over him with a mellifluous lustre he had never seen lower down. It is the spiritual halo covering these high regions, the distant dusk of diffused radiance proceeding from the temple at the hill-top still so far, so very far away, and still entirely out of sight.

Once the pilgrim gets into the regions of this twilight, his progress is steady and assured. The way is clear and he takes rapid strides. As he proceeds, the light becomes stronger and stronger, and the landscape shines before him with ever-brightening glow.

At last, when he catches a glimpse of the temple, he feels his redemption as within sight. He increases the pace and literally runs to the goal. There may yet be millions of windings to be got through, but he does not lose heart, nor does he slacken his speed.

He makes a pull, a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, to rush into the bosom of the great Sun shining within the portals of the temple, and spreading His myriad rays of hallowing, soothing, bliss, far and wide. He who has once caught sight of the soft delicious effulgence, turns not to the right or to the left, but makes for the goal, bathed in the flood of a soul-stirring halo and peace.

The religious literature of Hinduism is, very often not without reason, accused of being saturated with pessimism to the core. There are, no doubt, scores of books depicting life as a great evil and presenting a powerful array of reasons for the conclusion that life is by no means worth living. This is not the case with the whole of Indian literature, though, after due allowance is made for honorable exceptions, it must be conceded that the general trend and drift is to take a despondent view. No man who is not stout of heart can do this journey of life with benefit. There is however no reason whatever to take such a gloomy view of earthly existence, and lose heart.

नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो न च प्रमादात्तपसोवाप्यलिंगात्
एतैरुपायैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वांस्तस्यैष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम ॥

MANDUKA III, II, 4.

"Nor is God obtained by the strengthless, nor by the careless, nor without marks of austerity; the wise who strives by these means, of him, the Atma enters the abode of Brahman."

What is the warrant to be gloomy and cheerless? Is it because the way is long? Surely, given time and energy, it *can* be journeyed through. Is it because the road is not strewn with roses, but with thorns? Surely, others have trodden the path before, and what was possible for them is possible to every earnest pilgrim. Is it because the winding labyrinth is dark and cheerless? Surely, there must be light as we proceed, and cheer, as we listen with eagerness. The sailor descries the land much quicker than the untrained eye of the traveller. Still attention enables us to catch the very music of the spheres, if only we will it. Our elder brothers who have gone before, tell us the secret of making progress in the journey, the temptations that encounter us on the way, the dangers and risks to be avoided all along the route. Those who have caught sight of the glow on the distant horizon, go into raptures in telling the tale of their experience. Those who have gone further still and tasted the supreme bliss of the highest heights—the bliss of a true communion, find words unequal to the task of expressing the intensity of the spiritual joy felt by them at the peaks.

Whatever else God may be, He is undoubtedly Love and Bliss. To know Him is to love Him,

To realise Him is to enjoy Him. To vision Him is bliss ineffable. The end of Vedanta is to vision God and become blessed. Therein lies liberation. It is the path and the only path, and there is none other for this end. ॥ नान्यःपन्था अयनाय विद्यते ॥

Sri Madhva teaches us that the difficult ascent cannot be attempted or accomplished without one indispensable help, namely, the grace of the Almighty. At every step, the Divine Grace should vivify and inspire us and lead us on. In this respect, Sri Madhva's system differs from many others. The Adwaitin thinks that when Nescience is destroyed by knowledge, release *must* result as a matter of course. They say that knowledge kills Nescience by the very essence of its nature, as they are natural foes of each other. They say that it is impossible to conceive of knowledge otherwise than as the destroyer of Nescience. In this system, no God's Grace is necessary to interpose between knowledge and ingorance. When knowledge is once attained, not all the Parabrahmans conceivable can stop the attainment of release. Such is the argument of the Adwaitic creed. The Sankhyas say that Reason discovers the knowledge of truth, and that when truth is known, the prison-house made of Prakriti crumbles away. The union of Purusha (Jeeva) with Prakriti is Samsara, while their divorce sets the Jeeva free. It is the Jeeva's own effort, his unaided struggle, that brings about salvation. There is no room for God in this system, and much less for His Grace. The Yoga of Patanjali admits a god, but makes out a thoroughly unconcerned Yogin of the Supreme Being. Patanjali thinks that God does not

trouble himself with the good and evil of mankind, that He is quite unconcerned with earthly events, that He is far, far, away, self-contained and self-satisfied. Such a god has no grace to bestow upon his devotees.

Thus, some of the theistic systems of ancient India did not inculcate the immanence of God and His merciful Grace to uplift humanity. All the systems with one voice admitted the bondage of Prakriti and argued about the ways and means for the soul's release. How did the Jeeva get into bondage and how could he get rid of it ? Sri Madhva thinks that the Divine Will is the chief operating cause responsible for the bondage, and that Divine Grace is the only means of getting rid of it. Apart from its merits as a reasoned truth, apart from the authoritative basis on which it rests, this view carries dignity on its brow, invests God with a truly loveable God-head, and makes religious ' struggle ' a labour of love.

The Sruti declares **यमैवेष वृणुते तेन लभ्य :** " By him is God attained, whom He chooses to grace." Sri Krishna says in Bhagavat Gita, **तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत । तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्ति स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतं ॥** " To Him alone do thou resort as thy refuge in every way; *Through His Grace* thou shalt attain supreme devotion to Him and eternal Peace." **मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजीमां नमस्कुरु । मामेवैष्यासि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥**

" Let thy mind be in Me, be My votary, be sacrificer to Me, bow down to Me, Me alone thou shalt reach. This is true, I pledge my troth, for thou art beloved of Me."

These and hundreds of other passages in the Scriptures lay down that it is God that is pleased to

lead us in the right path, to equip us for knowledge, to bestow Knowledge upon those of us who are qualified, to give us, in time, a visual perception of His Form, to free us from Samsaric prison, and to grant bliss unto us after release. We are powerless to devise means and ends at any stage of this spiritual evolution. Sri Madhva lays the greatest emphasis on the Divine Grace.

Scholars of Purva Meemamsa will see this truth about Divine Grace very powerfully expounded by Jaimini. Heaven, he maintained, was too good to be the subject of barter. No works of any kind, he said, could secure us Heaven. It was too glorious, too lofty to be taken by storm or bought for a price. It was a pure gift of God, out of His Grace, not a position claimable as a right.

God's Grace that it is the end of man to secure, is not arbitrarily bestowed. The devotee must struggle and exert himself to win it. God's Will, which is expressed in the Scriptures, lays down a course of penance and studies as a preparation. It is this that the Uttara Meemamsa treatises discuss at great length.

The question then is, what are we to do to secure Divine Grace? How will He be pleased to turn to us, and shower Bliss on our parched heads? The optimistic ideal of the west seems to be that life is not only worth living, but there is nothing else worth aspiring for. Gold is there worshipped with fervour. There, the scramble for the nugget at the mines takes place with maddening frenzy and fever. Material prosperity is the only goal kept in view. This is optimism with a vengeance. The eastern ideal is totally different. We agree

in the spirit of the Christian saying that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. Narayana the Supreme Being is a friend of the poor and the destitute. He is naturally inaccessible to those who are absorbed in the worship of *Mammon*.

SECTION I. VYRAGIA.

The devotee should first of all learn lessons in Vyragia before he enters on the sacred studies. Vyragia is literally 'dispassion'. In this word lies summed up a whole philosophy of conduct. The theory of Vyragia presses the transitoriness of life upon our constant attention. It calls on us to remember death always and be prepared against its advent.

" Do good to-day, time passes, death is near
Death falls upon a man all unawares
Like a ferocious wolf upon a sheep.
Death comes when his approach is least expected ;
Death sometimes seizes ere the work of life
Is finished or its purposes accomplished.
Death carries off the weak and strong alike
The brave and timorous, the wise and foolish,
And those whose objects are not yet achieved.
Therefore delay not. Death may come to-day,
Death will not wait to know if thou art ready
Or if thy work be done. Be active now
While thou art young, and time still thy own ;
This very day, perform to-morrow's work,
This very morning, do thy evening's task ;
When duty is discharged, then if thou live,
Honour and happiness will be thy lot
And if thou die, supreme beatitude.

MAHABHARATA, XII 6584. VERSE.

We forget death, and live a life of the senses with such an amount of all-absorbing earnestness, as to multiply the terrors of death a thousand-fold when it makes an approach and reminds us of its grim presence. We seldom remember that life is only a fleeting pastime. Pleasure and pain are possible only when attachment subsists between the Jeeva and the objects of sense. It is the feeling of *me* and *mine* that gives birth to joy and grief. He who adumbrates 'my' with an emphasis, and surrounds himself with a large circle or group of possessions distinguished by that epithet, doting with fondness on *my* children, *my* beloved, *my* house, *my* property, 'with a big 'my' always looming in the mind, must be prepared for these beloved objects of his turning out his bitter enemies someday, and robbing him of peace and rest. Desire and attachment begetting likes and dislikes, passion and prejudice, are the fertile sources of man's miseries.

All the philosophies of India have been unanimous in denouncing desire and attachment as our worst enemies, and laying down rules to destroy them. Some of them have exhorted men to do very strange things indeed. The Yoga philosophy, for instance, inculcated asceticism, Raja Yoga, and Hata Yoga. Renunciation and asceticism, promulgated by Patanjali's system would, if systematically and universally practised, dismember and disintegrate society in a decade. Patanjali believed in tortures of the flesh to cut the gordian knot. Desire was to be smothered by impossible postures, agonizing immolations of muscle, and tortures of breaths, resulting in disorders of the brain. This was deemed the only mode of conquering Prakriti.

As a contrast, it is refreshing to turn to the Bhagavat Gita, and learn what Sri Krishna inculcates on the subject. He says that no body need resort to the forest, or renounce society, as a preparation for spirituality. There is no need for self-immolation of any kind. There is no need to abandon ties of kith and kin, or neglect duties political, social, or moral. True renunciation consists, according to Sri Krishna, in abandoning and resigning unto God, the fruits of action. Every one should do his duty for duty's sake, should love God for God's sake. "You are competent to work. But the fruit of it is in My hands" says He to Arjuna. 'Do not worry yourselves over fruits. Do your duty manfully, because it is your duty. Let not the prospect of reward be the incentive for your actions. Whatever you do, dedicate it unto Me,' is the earnest exhortation.

Here is a sublime ideal to follow. What is to be renounced is not duty, is not activities, but the worry of likes and dislikes, the hope and anxiety about rewards and consequences—the hallucination that man is an actor, is a free agent. What we are asked to do is to resign ourselves unty His Will, surrrender our activities unto Him, rely on His wisdom absolutely, to guide us, in short, realise our dependence on Him out and out. It matters not whether we are Brahmacharins, householders, hermits, or ascetics. The only condition is that we form no ties of attachment, and encourage no egotism of 'me' and 'mine'.

To withdraw from attachment from sense-objects, while living and moving amongst them and actively dealing with them in the discharge of our duties, is the paramount secret of lopping off the fetters that hold us bound. To think deeply over the matter what are

these sense-objects worth, that they should enslave our emotions and hold us in perpetual thraldom.

The Bhagavat Geeta sets its face strongly against the practice of making religious offerings for the sake of rewards. It condemns duty performed with a purpose, whatever that may be. It gives no encouragement to the view that reduces religious observances to the sordid level of contracts. He who loves God in order to obtain a return is a trader, trafficking in religion. Sri Krishna will be no party to such a barter. It seems to be perfectly reasonable that no mundane object should be allowed to worry us and pilfer our mental repose. A trust in God gives us true happiness, but a trust in man, in kith and kin, in wealth and effects, does not bring us peace.

> "Man wants but little here below,
> Nor wants that little long."

Life is truly a span and earthly bliss but a bubble. It is not illusory, it is not unreal, but it is evanescent, and is transitory. Realising this fully, we should rate our worldly belongings at no more than their true worth. What is life after all, health, wealth, power, fame, and all. By itself it is nothing, nothing at all. When it is turned towards the source of all, when health is used to sing His praise, wealth to bestow charity, power to glorify His name, fame to publish His greatness, they have a meaning and a purpose. Otherwise, these little bubbles, liable to burst at a breath, are not worth looking at. A great writer says "O Vanity, O airy nothing! Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" Health is but an empty name, life, a troubled dream, and celebrity, a fugitive meteor. Solomon heads his work with these words

"Vanity of Vanities; all is Vanity." Everything is vain and unimportant that relates to man, when we remember the transitory course of his mortality. Everything becomes dignified when we look to the goal to which he is hastening.

As a stream glides rapdily along, thus flows the course of our existence, which, having traversed, with more or less noise, a greater or less extent of country, disembogues at length into a dark gulf where honours, distinctions, and worldly prerogatives are unacknowledged and unknown, like rivers which lose their name and their celebrity when they mingle with the ocean.

Let us gratefully remember that God infuses into our perishable frame a spiritual power which can acknowledge the truth of His existence, adore the redundant plenitude of His Perfections, rely on His Goodness, fear His Justice, and aspire to Heaven. Vairagya then is renunciation in a technical sense, viz. dedication of all activity unto God. It implies withdrawal of attachment from sense-objects, a subjugation of likes and dislikes, and a conquest of egotism by a trustful dependence on God. It implies a control of mental faculties and a discipline of the senses. No Vairagya is possible without Shama and Dama, which mean steadiness of mind, and singleness of purpose. When the mind is a weathercock responding to every gust of hope and desire, the passions run riot, and concentration is an impossibility. No religious life is possible unless the mind shines bright and smokeless, like a flame well protected from the breeze.

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव च । बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च । इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् । आत्मेन्द्रिय-

मनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिण: । यस्त्वविज्ञानवान्भवत्ययुक्तेन मनसा सदा । तस्येन्द्रियाण्यवश्यानि दुष्टाश्वा इव सारथेः । यस्तु विज्ञानवान्भवति युक्तेन मनसा सदा । तस्येन्द्रियाणि वश्यानि सदश्वाइव सारथेः । यस्त्वविज्ञानवान्भवत्यमनस्कः सदाऽशुचिः । न स तत्पदमाप्नोति संसारं चाधिगच्छति ॥

"Know the self the chariot-owner, the body the chariot; know reason the charioteer and the mind as the reins. They call the senses the horses, sense-objects their province. The self joined to the senses and mind, is the enjoyer, thus say the wise. Whoever is ignorant, always with the mind loose, his senses are uncontrolled, like bad horses of the charioteer. Whoever is wise, always with mind tightened, his senses are controlled, like good horses of the charioteer Whoever indeed is ignorant, thoughtless, always impure, he does not obtain the goal, but comes again into Samsara."

Thus proclaims the Sruti. It is a fundamental step in the path that the mind should be got to be steady. As Arjuna declares again and again, mind is very hard to govern and control, but no spiritual progress is possible till that is drilled into obedience. A blazing fire cannot be extinguished by means of ghee poured into it. So, sensuous appetite cannot be put out by free play given to it and endless gratification procured for it. Subjugation of desire is indispensable for bringing the mind under control. This subjugation consists in dedicating all actions unto God as meant wholly and solely to please Him.

Yoga is the generic term in Sanskrit for this dedication. It means union literally. He who offers all his doings (Karma) unto God is a Karma Yogin, for he tries to seek union (not unity) with God by this

surrender. He who seeks union by knowledge is Gnana Yogin. The wise Rishis seek Heaven by constant devotion to study and intense knowledge and meditation. He who cultivates *love of God* by good works, and sound knowledge, is a Bhakti Yogin. By the blessing of God, Devas attain this God-love in a superior measure. It is common ground for all these classes of worshippers that all of them seek to reach God as the goal. Their hearts yearn after Him. They are not happy until they are gathered up in His bosom, never more to revert to Samsâra.

Yoga is thus not a technical name for the science of breaths alone. Sri Madhva does not put this science out of court altogether. He concedes that, meditation by harnessing breaths, restraining respiration, taking postures, focussing eyes on the tip of the nose and thoughts on Om, has its value. But this kind of Yoga is not indispensable.

As indicated above, there are 3 classes of devotees who are all on the right path, Karma Yogins, Gnana Yogins and Bhakti Yogins. Temperaments, capacity, and aptitude, determine the class to which any Jeeva belongs, All men in general are fit for being Karma Yogins alone. They cannot help being ceaselessly engaged in works. Their salvation lies through works. Dedication of fruits फलत्याग is the (Yoga) means for them.

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत्।
यत्तपस्यासि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणं॥

Says Sri Krishna: "Whatever you do, or eat, or sacrifice, or gift away, whatever austerity you perform, O Arjuna, offer it all unto Me." Other passages may

be quoted in abundance to the same effect. But one or two must suffice.

कायेन वाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा बुद्ध्यात्मना वानुसृतस्वभावं ।
करोति यद्यत्सकलं परस्मै नारायणायेति समर्पयेत्तत् ।

(BHAGAVATA XI, 2. 36.)

इष्टं दत्तं तपो जप्तं पूर्तं यच्चात्मनः प्रियं ।
दारान्सुतान्प्रियान्प्राणान्परस्मै सन्निवेदयेत् ॥

(BHAGAVATA XI, 3. 29.)

The sentiment in these passages is self-surrender in the discharge of duties.

Higher beings, Rishis as they are called, are fit for Gnana Yoga. Not that they are free from works altogether, but they are eminently introspective. Philosophy and meditation is their *forte*, as works are the *forte* of Karma Yogins.

Beings higher still in spiritual worth, are Bhakti Yogins. A whole-hearted love of God is their *Forte*. Their spiritual capacity admits of a surrender of heart in a measure and to an extent that the other classes are not capable of. It is Devas that mostly belong to this order.

It must however be borne in mind that the difference implied in this classification is one of degree alone. Karma, Gnana, and Bhakti, are not three different paths leading *independently* of one another to a common destination. They are merely several stages in a single path. Every Karma Yogi is bound to study the scriptures, acquire knowledge (Gnana), develop Bhakti, and vision God, so that by His Grace, he might be saved. Every Gnana Yogi must surrender his doings unto God, acquire knowledge, and practise

devotion. Every Bhakti Yogi also should do likewise. The difference lies in the preponderance of the particular element to which the Jeeva is by inherent nature and aptitude capacitated.

Religious life manifests itself in the triple form of *Conduct*, *Doctrine*, and *Devotion*. We have to serve God by deporting ourselves as His humble servants, by subordinating our will to the Divine will, and by ceaseless service rendered unto Him and unto His Bhaktas. We have to serve and glorify God by studying and realising the truths of Veda, by believing in a system of holy doctrines, by a firm grasp of Sri Madhva's philosophy in respect to God, Soul, and Nature. We have to serve God by means of devotion, by turning sublime love unto Him.

Our conduct, the expression of our will, becomes religious in so far as our volition is merged in the Divine. This embraces not only ritualism, but every activity of man in relation to God and God's Bhaktas. This is the Province of Karma Yoga. Religious conduct is not possible and cannot endure without a grounding of Philosophy, the product of intellect. This is the Province of Gnana Yoga. Will and intellect are utterly inadequate to make us happy unless we call in emotion to express itself in devotion and complete the service. This is Bhakti Yoga. The three Yogas embrace between them, the functions of Will, Intellect, and Emotion, and therefore cover the entire province of the human mind. By Karma alone, no salvation is possible. It was Bháttas that put forward works such as sacrifices as capable, by themselves, of leading to Heaven. Given abundant wealth, they thought that tons of ghee poured into the fire accompanied by mechanical Mantra-recitations,

must open the gates of the highest Heaven to the Sacrificer. Sri Madhva opposes this view. The corner-stone of his theology is soul-dedication. No manual service or lip-service is of any value, if not accompanied by knowledge and Bhakti. Good works, fastings, penance, charity, and so on, are useful to bring about a steadiness and purity of mind. But this is only a preparation and no more. A pure and steady mind is essential for acquisition of knowledge. Sat Karma, or good works, represent, therefore, only the preliminary process necessarily to be passed through before true knowledge can be gained. A study of the scriptures, consisting of lectures heard, lessons ruminated, and the gist meditated upon, produces sound knowledge. It enables us to realize God's greatness and our own littleness, God's independence and our own dependence on Him. Knowledge thus acquired produces Bhakti (love of God). By the grace of God, the Bhakta visions the Almighty. This vision evokes the higher grace of God that leads the Bhakta into Vykunta.

The third Adhyaya of the Brahma Sootras lays down Vairagya, Bhakti, Upasana, and Aparokshagnana as the stages to be passed through by every Mumukshu (aspirant for Heaven), be he a Karma Yogin, Gnana Yogin, or Bhakti Yogin. Vairagya or dispassion has been explained above at some length. Let me say a few words about each of the others.

SECTION II ; BHAKTI.

By this term, Sri Madhva understands every shade of the heart's yearning towards God. While Vairagya connotes the negative aspect, a state of passivity and renunciation, Bhakti denotes the positive aspect, an active longing, a state of love, an outpouring of devotion,

reverence, awe, and admiration, a surrender of the soul in melting tenderness.

There have heen cults in India that ruled by fear and dread. Demon-worship has dominated for ages past. Kâli, Durga, Chandika, Ambika, Mâri, Ayanar, and hosts of deities still reign supreme in rural parts, working upon the fears and superstitions of people, and exacting offerings of blood. Not a disease, not a disorder physical or mental, but might, in the belief of people, be averted by the propitiation of a demon or spirit. It was supposed that we are living in a reign of terror, the unseen spirits waging war with us on every side and levying terrible penalties as the price of their favours. Fear is the ruling idea of this cult.

Bhakti is something quite different. Love is the ruling key-note of this faith. The Bhakta approaches God freely and frankly, and offers Him his best posession viz., his *self*. The heart is given up, and the soul is surrendered, unto God. The Bhakta annihilates himself in the abandon of affection. He may worship God as his Father, as his Brother, as his Son, as his Friend, or as his Beloved. It is not wealth that is offered, nothing earthly, nothing sordid, but the Atma himself. It is the sacrifice of self unto the Supreme Self, *Atma Yagna*, that is the end and aim of Bhakti. The archer shoots his own Atma to strike at Brahman the butt, and be swallowed up therein.

The basic idea of Bhakti is a consciousness, a realization of the Bhakta's inferiority to, and dependence on, God. If man and God be identical in any sense, no Bhakti is possible. Where "I am He" is felt, Bhakti refuses to germinate. The soil is unfit for this plant. A feeling that God is infinitely greater than

all other Jeevas, that His infinity is unbridgeable, that He is just, merciful and gracious, and that, if He choose, He will lift up the tiny Jeeva to beatitude, is a condition precedent to the germination of Bhakti.

The Vaishnavaism of Sri Ramanuja and of Sri Chaitanya insists on this consciousness as well as that of Sri Madhva. Sri Madhva goes further than Sri Ramanuja, and insists that even in the state of final beatitude, the released soul enjoys only limited bliss and continues infinitely inferior to God. Thus it is, that, while Adwaita appeals to the intellecttand makes religion an affair of the head, the Vaishnava makes religion essentially an affair of the heart.

The most valuable possession of man is love. God has implanted in human nature nothing more sublime than this sentiment. All systems of philosophy call God the essence of Love or Bliss. Man, as the image of His maker, has his essence too made of love. To love is the noblest enjoyment of man in religious as in secular life. The heart moves outward like the tendrils of a creeper and seeks something to rest upon. The soul moves outward too, and wants to rest on God. The love-emotion is a necessity of our being. Turned towards unworthy objects, it is chilled. Turned towards God the worthiest of the worthy, it meets with a stimulus responsive of its highest aspirations, a home of bliss simply ineffable. Will man feel the force of this truth and drink of the joys of Heaven by self-surrender (prapatti)? Will he become a Bhakta rather than a Gnani? Will he be a warm gurgling fountain of love rather than be a block of ice frozen by intellectuality? In words of fire, Sri Madhva appeals to the higher nature of man to elect between the two.

The love of God implied by Bhakti is not a very simple sentiment. It is an organic growth, the product of careful rearing. No man can dream himself into a noble character by a simple effort of the will, and rise one morning to find himself bloomed into a Bhakta. Struggle is the school of evolution in nature. Difficulties, temptations, pitfalls, and failures, constitute the experiences necessary to build up character.

The heart requires as careful an education as the head, in order that it may truly and sincerely be consecrated to the Supreme Being. No organic growth is possible without a slow, constant, assimilation of nutrition, and acquisition of experience, without a struggle against trials and surviving them to get better and better. A study of the Shastras is the first step in this education. A constant study alone is calculated to impress God on our hearts. It is only the scriptures that can dispel all shades of doubt and hesitation, from our minds. A strong and vigorous faith is one of the first requisites for Bhakti. Have the Scriptures dispelled all doubt? Are you firm, truly and sincerely, in the belief of Divine Supremacy? Are you prepared to stake all as a test of earnestness? Then, and not till then, can you relax your studies.

Moralists are well aware of the golden rule repeatedly and prominently emphasised in Christian writings as the highest philosophy of human conduct. "Do unto others as you would wish they should do unto you" is indeed a golden maxim presenting a very high ideal of virtue. But this was not unknown to our ancients. In the Bhagvat Geeta and the Mahabharata, this sentiment is strongly inculcated as the foundation of social morality.

"This is the sum of all true righteousness.
Treat others, as thou wouldst thyself be treated.
Do nothing to thy neighbour which hereafter
Thou wouldst not have thy neighbour do to thee.
In causing pleasure, or in giving pain
In doing good or injury to others
In granting or refusing a requst
A man obtains a proper rule of acting
By looking on his neighbour as himself.
Do naught to others, which if, done to thee,
Would cause thee pain; this is the sum of duty."

M. B V. 1617.

This sovereign of virtues only exhorts us however to put ourselves on a level of equality with others. When men are dominated by egotism, they set themselves in opposition to the world, the "I-ness" trying to vanquish every other interest in the world. But for the Police and the Penal Code, egotism would set the world on fire. When law and morality curb the "I-ness" within bounds, the conflict still subsists underground, and manifests itself in subtle outbursts, without a flagrant violation of decency. He who closely observes the language, conversation, and deportment of even refined society, can read the undercurrent of egotistic vanity which ever displays itself openly or covertly. "*I* said this, *I* said that, *I* did this, and *I* did that: Therefore how wise was *I*, how brave, how plucky, how clever!" This is the chorus right through, the suggestion being that nobody else is capable of so much wisdom and so much cleverness and so on. This is how the world is normally constituted. This is the mental attitude in which, the 'I-ness' of every individual asserts itself as

a superior factor and claims mastery and victory over the 'I-ness' of all other individuals.

The golden rule of conduct adverted to above, brings down man from this attitude of conceit and self-assertion, and reduces him to a level of equality with others. 'Do as you would be done by' sets up self as the standard of judgment. This, however, is not the crowning stage. It is reserved for the religion of Bhakti to soar higher still, if possible, and reach the climax. The self-assertive 'I' vanishes into unimportance when the soul is pervaded by Bhakti. 'Aham' claims neither superiority nor equality, but relegates itself into nothing, as against other Bhaktas and God. The beauty of the Bhakta consists in the utter self-effacement of which he is capable, in the service and sacrifice of which he is capable, and in the utter self-effacement in which he glories.

A Bhakta is one who treats his personal self as an altogether negligible quantity. He has no will of his own. He has no wants, no wishes of any kind. God Almighty absorbs all his mind and energy. He is mad with delight. He derives supreme happiness from giving himself up to please God and His Bhaktas. He looks upon God's devotees as a brotherhood unto whose serivce he dedicates himself. He is prepared for any sacrifice on their behalf. He loves all that are dear to God and gives a wide berth to every one else. His world is circumscribed and limited by God's Bhaktas. To all else he is indifferent.

In this connection, it may be useful to remove a prevailing misapprehension. It is usually supposed that Sri Madhva pleads for strong likes and dislikes, and that he inclucates a bigotry and hatred of other

sectarians. Sri Madhva does not tolerate any love or hatred except in relation to God. He exhorts men to love God, and ergo, to love all godly men. He exhorts hatred of God's enemies, because they are enemies of God. The hatred is not personal and selfish. No lover, can be truly such unless his likes and dislikes chime in with those of his beloved. Sri Madhva advocates hatred of all that is unpleasant to God,—a hatred of unrighteous and ungodly life out and out. It is not true Bhakti, if the Bhakta can effect a compromise with irreligion in any form or shape.

Even in the Advanced Text Book, Sanatana Dharma, it is stated (p./315) "Dwesha is to be eliminated entirely in personal relations, in relations between man and man, between one being and another being and is to be retained only as an *Abstract dislike* for anything that goes against the law, against the will of Ishwara."

Sri Madhva says similarly that we should revere the gods, and love our fellows, only because they are dear to God. We should be cold and apathetic to Rājasas and should dislike the Tamasas, for one reason and only one, viz. that the former are cold towards God and the latter hate Him.

Sri Madhva defines Bhakti as love induced by a conviction of Divine Greatness—the conviction being the result of sacred studies. According to the Master, the elements of Bhakti are (1) study (2) conviction (3) love. Without study and without an intelligent appreciation or admiration, no love can possibly arise, and much less can it endure.

It is a futile attempt to describe what are the characteristics of a true Bhakta. Those who have

studied the psychology of love, and analysed, watched, and noted the movements of lovers, may have an idea of what a Bhakta looks like. The description of Râdha in Devi Bhagavata makes an approach towards a delineation. Sri Madhva, the best of Yekanta Bhaktas, is the loftiest object-lesson on the subject, the embodiment, as he was, of true love based on flawless convictions.

The only power that can purge our hearts of sin is the Love of God. The only power that can set fire to the hay-rick of Karma is the grace of God invoked by Bhakti. There is then no virtue which is not a manifestation or expression of Bhakti. Sri Ramanuja says that :

Kalyana	Purity
Satyam	Truthfulness
Arjavam	Rectitude
Daya	Compassion
Danam	Charity
Ahimsa	Inoffensiveness
Anavasada	Cheerfulness

mark the Bhakta.

With the buoyance of love elevating his soul, the Bhakta has no occasion to be pessimistic and down-hearted, and no reason to be moody. He sees only roses strewn about him, and he dedicates them to the idol of his heart, Sri Vishnu. श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णो: स्मरणं पादसेवनं। अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनं। इतिपुंसार्पिता विष्णौ भक्तिश्चेन्नवलक्षणा॥ क्रियते भगवत्यद्धा तन्मन्येऽधीतमुत्तमं॥ are the noble words of Prahlada in the 7th Skandha of Sreemad Bhagavatam. This passage sums up the characteristic doings of a true Bhakta.

It conveys the following ideas:—"The devotee spends his time in listening to sacred stories. He is eager to hear God's praise sung. He is constantly uttering the Divine name, and singing hymns, sonnets, and ballads, relating to Narayana, Krishna and other Avatars of God. His memory is well stocked with episodes narrated in books, and he is ever engaged in adding to the stock and drawing upon the recollection. He invokes God in an image or in some holy personage, and serves Him in the substitute, like a distracted lover doting on a momento of the absent beloved, and addressing words of endearment thereto. He shampoos the Lord's feet, offers incense and flowers, sings the Lord's praise, and offers himself as a slave. To crown all, he offers up his soul as an utter surrender in affection. These nine indications of Bhakti betoken the highest education of man, (आधीतमुत्तमं) says Prahlada, and sure enough they do.

SECTION 3. UPASANA.

Upasana is only a higher stage of Bhakti. In this condition, the devotee renounces the world and makes great advance in spiritual education. He makes a profound study of the sacred works, withdraws himself thoroughly from worldly pursuits, and spends long periods of introspective thought. To kith and kin, to friends and foes, to pleasure and pain, he is equally indifferent and absent-minded. Reverie is his chief pastime, meditation is his activity. The centre on which his thoughts are focussed is of course God and godly men.

In this stage, the devotee knows the Shastras through and through. The conclusions of Vedanta are deeply ingrained in his mental and spiritual

constitution. He ruminates them, over and over again. He chews the cud of all his studies, and gets them well digested and assimilated into his spiritual life. It may be that he withdraws himself from home and society, and repairs to solitudes, or he may choose to continue a worldly man for all appearance. Wherever he may be, and whatever his surroundings, he is a mental recluse, who is able, automatically, to withdraw his senses from external objects like a tortoise drawing in its limbs.

Upasana is the final preparation and probation for God-Vision known as Aparoksha. As the God-Vision varies in splendour and duration with the capacity, aptitude, and rank, of each individual soul, the period of probation is proportionately long or short. The study and contemplation of Upasana is naturally prolonged and intense in the souls that are destined for a prolonged God-Vision of great intensity. Brahma, Vayu, Rudra and the higher gods, undergo Upasana for very long periods of time, because, the reward they attain, at last, is proportionate to their qualification. Frail man is not equal to such long-continued penance, nor is he capable of standing a God-Vision of the duration and the intensity that the gods are capable of.

Works, knowledge, and devotion, are common to all, whatever the stage and the capacity. Turned Godwards, these lead the devotee nearer and nearer to the goal. According to their ability, they may resort to images in aid of worship or they may meditate on God immanent in the Universe. They may be प्रतीकालंबनाः or अप्रतीकालंबनाः according to the degree of their innate spiritual strength. They may be Karma Yogins, or Gn na Yogins, on the same principle. The

general course for each is still the same; works, knowledge and devotion, the preponderating element being different with each Jeeva according to his fitness.

Our books give a long list of Bhakti Yogins counting from Karmaja Devas up to the Four-faced Brahma. These are seers of God's omnipresence, souls above the plane of image-worship and worship in limited forms. These are *Sämsa Jeevas*, that is, capable of taking more than one body at a time. Gnana Yogins comprise Deva Gandharvas, and some lower deities. These are Pratikalambanas. These Jeevas are also capable of taking more than one birth at a time by splitting themselves into parts and assuming various bodies. Karma Yogins are mostly among human beings. They are *Niramsas*, that is incapable of taking more than one body at a time, being incapable of splitting themselves into parts.

There is great difference among the Jeevas in respect to their power of concentration and meditation. No soul is capable of grasping all the attributes of the Infinite. Each soul selects that attribute, or group of attributes, that is suited to its capacity, and ponders over it. Some worship God, for instance, as Intelligence. Others, as Intelligence, Being, Bliss, and Immanence, and so on. On this capacity and training, depends the vision-form (बिम्बापरोक्ष) that will stand before the Upâsaka on the eve of redemption.

According to Sri Madhva's theology, Jeevas are competent to worship God only through Mukhya Prana, the Lord of Breaths. The theory is that as Vayu or Mukhya Prana is the presiding deity of Life and dwells within every Jeeva, the latter cannot approach the Lord except through Prana.

Sri Lakshmi is competent to contemplate God and worship him directly. The Four-faced Brahma and Vayu worship the Supreme Spirit dwelling in their own souls. But all the Jeevas lower down in rank have to worship the Lord as the in-dweller of Prana. By offering worship to his in-dweller of Prana we pay homage to both. We obtain the grace of Prana who will make the way easy for reaching the Lord.

Sri Madhva's system is somewhat unique in according to this Deity the highest rank in the hierarchy of gods, next to Narayana, Lakshmi and Brahmâ. This view seems amply borne out by the Scriptures. It is impossible to conceive of creation without vibration. Akasa and the rest vibrate under the action and impulse of Prana. Swami Vivekananda quotes the Sruti "**यदिदं किंच जगत्सर्वं प्राण एजति निस्सृतं**" declaring that 'everything in the Universe has been projected, Prana vibrating'; this view supports the pre-eminence of this deity. It is Prana that is the author of the five-fold functions denoted by Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana, and Samana, breaths. These five are the servants of the chief whom we adore.

"This Prana is underneath, overhead, and in the middle. He is on all sides: He is the cause of all" says Vayu Prokta.

"प्राण एवाधस्तात्प्राण उपरिष्टात्प्राणो मध्यतः प्राणस्सवर्तः प्राण-एवेदं सर्वं।" "यतस्सर्वं जगद्व्याप्य तिष्ठति प्राण एव तु। अतो धृत जगत्सर्वमन्यथाकेन धार्यते ॥" ॥ वायुप्रोक्ते ॥

In Brihat Samhita it is stated "The ear and the other senses together with the mind and thought all form only twelve organs. They are called Indrias (senses) because they pass outward to the object; and

the all-powerful Prana standing firm in his place, is guiding all." Even when the Jeeva is asleep, it is the chief Prana and his five servants, that are awake and are doing their function to keep the body alive.

Numerous texts have been cited in Mādhwa writings in proof of Prana's position as the Universal Pervader of all Jeevas and as an inseparable companion of the Lord. मध्ये वामनमासीनं विश्वेदेवा उपासते is a sample to indicate the drift of the teaching that he stands in the middle and all the gods do him homage. His position in the middle means that he is the intermediary between all beings on the one hand and the Supreme Lord on the other.

As the head of the hierarchy and the First Born in creation, (being equal in position to the Four-faced Brahma), it is in him that all the lower beings involute and dissolve, at the end of evey Mahakalpa. It is therefore his privilege to lead the hosts to the river of Immortality and tide them over to liberation.

As explained in a previous chapter, every form of being gets infolded into the parent-form out of which it had sprung: *e.g.* earth, into water, water into fire, fire into air, and the air into Akasa, and so on, up to Mahat, the Gunas, and Avyakta. On the plane of chit-beings, the same law of involution and evolution holds good from the lowest worm-life imaginable up to Prana. This deity stands at the top of the scale, and is as such privileged to get the whole hosts infolded into him and unfolded out of him, from time to time. If this law of nature be rational, the theory of all Jeevas worshipping God in and through Prana is quite intelligible. Prana, the presiding deity of life and energy, is the appro-

priate functionary of God to give us vigour and strength in our trials, to sustain us in our efforts, and strengthen us for the task of realising God. To invoke him is to acquire fortitude and courage in climbing the hill of religious duty. This, in brief, is the outline of the theory. It has been the theme of grievous errors and misconceptions, some of our critics going so far as to say that it is an idea borrowed from Christian theology.

Treatises on Yoga philosophy go into every minute details in describing and laying down the *modus operandi* of a true Upasaka. The great object to be attained is the one-pointed mind able to divert its attention from external nature and fix itself on God. The mind, which is nothing if not vibration and motion, cannot be got under control, without laborious practice and severe drill. The training necessarily involves great strain at the outset, and considerable physical torture. It is a process of taking the enemies' outposts by storm, unlike the easy and slow methods of works, study, and devotion, available to all. Persons of exceptional courage alone are capable of the enormous determination and will-power necessary to carry out the Yogic practices with profit.

Patanjali lays down, and in this, other Hindu writers concur, that Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi are the eight Angas (limbs) of Yoga. They relate to disciplines of every kind calculated to subdue a wavering mind. In ordinary parlance, Yama stands for self-control, and the observance of every moral and religious duty. The duties are enumerated variously as follows:

ब्रह्मचर्यं दयाक्षान्तिर्दानं सत्यमकल्कता।
अहिंसाऽस्तेयमाधुर्ये दमश्चेति यमाः स्मृताः॥

Y : 3. 313.

The list comprises all the noble virtues including truthfulless and tenderness to animal life. Patanjali considers Yama as the first step in the practice of Yoga, using the term in a technical sense, and conveying, thereby, the idea of self-control of every shade and degree.

Niyama is regularity of self-imposed vows and observances. There are 10 forms of this, enumerated.

शौचमिज्यातपोदानं स्वाध्यायोपस्थनिग्रहः
व्रतमौनोपवासंच स्नानंच नियमा दश॥

This includes penances and austerities of every sort.

Asana deals with fixed postures as powerful aids to contemplation.

Prânâyâma and *Pratyahara* deal with the suspension and recovery of breaths. During the mental recitation of the names and attributes, restraint of breath is very helpful to promote retention in memory.

Dharana in common parlance is retentive memory. Patanjali inculcates a suspended breath as essential for a steady abstraction of mind, for a collection of ideas so as to be one-pointed.

Dhyana is the higher stage of meditation, in which a mental repersentation occurs of the attributes of the Supreme Being.

Samâdhi is the crowning step in which perfect absorption of thought occurs into the object of meditation, *viz.*, the Supreme Spirit. It is the state in which the avenues of the 10 senses are closed against the external world.

Sceptics are reluctant to believe the possibility of *Samadhi* as a scientific fact in nature. Physiology and psychology, as understood so far, seems to laugh it out of court. But the sceptic will pause before ridiculing the idea and dismissing it as untenable. There seems to be reliable testimony recorded about it in the works of Professor Wilson, Monier Williams, and other European savants of Oriental scholarship. Proof of this kind is not to be lightly rejected.

The VIIth Act of Sakuntala contains a remarkable verse describing the Samadhi of a Rishi. It speaks of a sage whose body stood immoveable like the trunk of a tree, half buried in an ant-hill, with his breast closely encircled by snake-skins. Such was the impassiveness of this ascetic that ants had thrown up their mound as high as his waist without being disturbed, and birds had built their nests in his hair. Sir Monier Williams quotes this sloka in the 'Indian wisdom,' and vouches for the possibility of such a Samadhi by quoting a remarkable instance of the kind that had come under his own observation.

In September 1887, a remarkable incident is said to have occured at Darjeling. A Lama performed a wonderful feat in the presence of many witnesses. An eye-witness states, "suddenly he, still retaining his sitting posture, rose perpendicularly into air to the height of, I should say, two cubits, and then floated without a

tremor or motion of a single muscle, like a cork in still water." (P. 293, Hindu Superiority).

In 1837, a Fakir of Lahore engaged to bury himself for any length of time in a box. Maharaja Ranjit Singh allowed the experiment under the strictest watch. He continued buried in a box for 40 days and nights. When it was opened at last, the Fakir came out hale and hearty. Dr. Macgregor records this scence at some length in his 'History of the Sikhs'. He says that himself and the Maharaja, attended by the king's grandson, Sirdars, as well as General Ventum and Captain Wade, witnessed the wonderful feat. He states, "when the Fakir was able to converse, the completion of the feat was announced by the discharge of guns and other demonstrations of joy; while a rich chain of gold was placed round his neck by Ranjit himself."

In an instance recorded by Professor Wilson (Essays on the religion of the Hindus. Vol. I. p. 209) a Brahmin sat on air wholly unsupported, and remained sitting on one occasion for 12 minutes, and on another, for 40 minutes.

Colonel Olcott records an account described to him by Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra. It describes a Yogin's body found apparently quite lifeless. All manner of tortures was used to recover him in vain. It is said that "he was then touched by the hand of a female, and he instantly came to his senses." (Lecture on Theosophy, the scientific basis of religion, by Colonel, Olcott p. 18). To the same effect there are other proofs of an unimpeachable character.

SECTION IV—APAROKSHA.

God-Vision.

Aparoksha is the penultimate stage of the path. It is the reward of Bhakti and Upasana continued for a sufficient period and in the proper manner. It is the consummation devoutly wished for in crores of ages.

Aparoksha is God-Vision. It takes place when the Lord chooses to take a form and flashes as an image of light before the inner gaze of the Bhakta.

Every kind of meditation or introspection implies a mental image. No thought is possible without pictures presented before the mental eye. But this is not Aparoksha. One who is engaged in deep prayer, invariably thinks of God in some kind of form, however opposed, he may be, in profession, to image-worship; but the vision thus met with is not God but only an image composed of the mind-stuff, the in-dweller whereof is God. It is as much 'Image-worship' as the worship of exterior idols or pictures.

In Aparoksha, however, what is visioned is not a vehicular form, but God Himself, directly choosing to become the object of direct, mental, or spiritual perception. The mind educated by prolonged study and concentration reaches a highly attenuated subtlety of perception to become capable of standing this God-Vision. 'दृश्यते त्वग्र्यया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः' is the declaration of Sruti. "God is visioned by the attenuated intellect of very subtle seers."

Among commentators of some authority, there is possibly a divergence of view in this respect, some

holding God-Vision to be exclusively spiritual in character, and others, that the 'God-Vision' obtained before 'release' मोक्ष, is a mental function, while it is purely spiritual, after Linga Sarira has vanished.

It is needless to add that the visual perception of Divine Avatars is not 'Aparoksha.' Thousands of men saw Sri Rama and Sri Krishna when these moved about in human society in Northern India. These men were not *Aparoksha Gnanees* by reason of the circumstance that they came into ocular contact with the form of God. Aparoksha is a technical term for the perception of God with the spiritual eye, or a peculiar vision with the mental eye, by that section of Jeevas who are competent to attain Vaikunta and who have qualified themselves by proper methods to receive the blessing.

The form that the Lord chooses to present, differs for each Jeeva. Every Jeeva (individual soul) is a reflected image of His Maker The Supreme Being is the Bimba (Original), and the Jeeva is the Prati-Bimba (Reflection). That shape which is the appropriate original of the reflection in question, is the form presented in the God-Vision of that Jeeva. It is the visual interview with this form, that constitutes the *Bimbaparoksha* spoken of in the Scriptures as the penultimate goal.

It is most important to remember that 'God-Vision' is not something extorted from God as a rightful reward of services rendered. It is the result of the Divine Grace pure and simple. The Lord blesses only those whom he chooses.

Blessed indeed is the devotee on whom the Lord's Grace descends in this manner Human language

is too weak to depict the sublimity of the interview in which an imperfect Jeeva stands face to face before Perfection itself. There He is at last! A figure of light stands before the Jeeva, a figure of glory and majesty too great for words and thoughts. The thrill of the moment brings on an ecstasy. The trance defies description. The hair stands on end. The tongue cleaves to the roof of the mouth. The brain is dazed, but the sensation is one of delicious bliss. The light in front is dazzling but soothing withal. It excels myriads of suns in power, but is soft and bearable notwithstanding, bathing the Jeeva in a flood of bliss. The Divine Figure shines there as long as the Jeeva is qualified to stand the vision. From the lowest qualified Jeeva in the scale up to Brahma the four-faced, the gradation of qualifications is infinite. The vision varies in respect to each Jeeva in splendour as well as duration

Oh! the joy of the moment when the Lord chooses to condescend thus from invisibility. It is a crowded moment of glory, worth all the crores of births and trials undergone before. It is the moment when the vista of the measureless past appears as a happy memory, and congratulates the happy Jeeva upon his triumphs. It is the moment of undiluted joy when the Lord and his humble servant look at each other, to solve and laugh away the riddle of life.

Face to face with the Almighty! A personal communion with the Unknown and the Unknowable! Imagination reels at the effort to grasp the majesty of the situation. Imagination is powerless to conceive the feelings and thoughts of the blessed one at the momentous juncture. It is likely that the Jeeva will succumb under the strain and excite-

ment. No, not so. The Lord appears smiling and benignant, inspiring and encouraging, loving, and soothing. At this moment there is no occasion for fear or frown. To hymn the Lord's praise may be appropriate for the occasion, and this, the Jeeva is sure to do. To offer thanks will be natural. The heart surcharged with Bhakti may burst, to pour out love. Bygone memories of atheism, agnosticism, and irreligion, may crowd in to beget a little sense of abashment. But the heart will pour out thanks with freedom and confidence. In the presence of the loving, forgiving, Father, there will be no reserve, no shame, and no shyness, to prevent a free outflow of prayers and praise, at the great condescension.

We may take it, of course, that advantage will not be taken of the occasion to beg for rewards. It is no time at all for whining and boons, for petitions and bargains. Vaikunta itself will not be sought, though fairly within sight. The blessed Bhakta will be content with the Divine Presence and will seek nothing more.

With Aparoksha, the journey of life comes almost to a full stop. It marks a turning point in the road beyond which the march is easy and smooth. The Sruti says:

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिः छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥

"The knot of the heart bursts asunder; all doubts get exploded for ever; the store of Karma vanishes: when the Supreme Lord is visioned face to face."

When it is time, the vision goes out of sight, and the person opens his physical eyes to look about him.

He meets his kith and kin, his friends and followers, busy plying their trade and carrying on their little wars of jarring interest. He mingles with them once more, but as an altered man. Even his physical appearance now marks him from others as the chosen one reserved for the highest destiny. The face assumes a new glow, a halo of true Brahma Tejas. His sunny smile looks as if showering benediction around.

Peace is hereafter the key-note of his life. He has brought every kind of strife to an end, and made his peace with the Maker. He is ever joyful and thankful. He is prepared to lead his younger brothers on the path and save as many as possible. Some look upon him as a visionary and point the finger of ridicule at him. Others call him mad. He is deaf to the scorn and sneer of the wordly-wise. He is innocent and buoyant like a babe, quite calm and unruffled. He thinks no evil, is friendly to all. He never thinks of himself. He, preserves a dignified equanimity under all circumstances of pleasure and pain. He is afraid of none and provokes fear in none. Agitation of every kind, outburst of grief and anger, are unknown to him. He is reflective and cheerful.

एवं व्रतश्च प्रियनामकीर्त्या जातानुरागो द्रुतचित्तउच्चैः ।
हसत्यथो रोदिति रौति गायत्युन्मादवन्नृत्यति लोकबाह्यः ॥

BHAGAVATA XI. 2. 40.

"Thus, the sage continues to utter the name of the beloved. He feels love swelling up in a heart surcharged with emotion. He laughs, he weeps, he sings, he dances, like a lunatic beyond the pale of conventions."

कचिद्रुदन्त्यच्युतचिन्तया कचिद्धसंति नन्दन्ति वदन्त्यलौकिकाः ।
नृत्यन्ति गायन्त्यनुशीलयन्त्यजं भवन्ति तूष्णीं परमेत्यनिर्वृताः ॥

"Sometimes, they weep in reveries of the Immutable One. At times, they laugh, rejoice, and speak unwordly thoughts. They dance, sing, and imitate the Lord. They get mute, absorbed in thought of the Great One, and immersed in bliss."

One source of his excessive spontaneity is the intense relief afforded by the riddance of Karma. For, the Vision has broken the power of Karma over him. Of the three kinds of Karma that clogged his way and shadowed his steps in the immeasurable past, Sanchita the accumulated heap has been made a bonfire of by the torch of his knowledge (Gnana). The chain of Agami Karma waiting to bear fruits in the future has been snaped, and the links cast away. The *Prarabdha* alone remains to be suffered. This is a limited and fixed quantity, the sources of fresh supply and accumulation having been stopped. Even as to the *prarabdha*, concessions and reductions are possible by the Lord's grace.

The Aparokshita Jeeva continues in a physical body as long as the remnant of Prorabdha continues to exact its debt. It may be necessary to take some further incarnations too, to work it away, and this too, is done. The Prarabdha may consist of enjoyments or sufferings and both alike are gone through without demur.

If, as some Indian systems hold, the law were otherwise, and Karma was a hard creditor who should be paid to the last farthing by the worker himself, if there was no such thing as Aparoksha and the grace of God to interfere between the debtor and the Shylock,

eternity itself will be too short to work away the debt. There could be no escape for any man, however righteous, from the grip of Karmic seeds, and no end to the recurring decimal of births and deaths on the physical plane. For, while making feeble efforts to repay portions of the accumulated debt, further borrowings with enormous compound interest must be taking place. If the past debts be repaid in arithmetical progression, the inflow of additional loans takes place in geometrical progression. It is God's mercy that provides against such a dreary outlook. It is His Will that whosoever has visioned Him should emerge the victor of Karma. It is he that bids Karma retire vanquished from the field, as soon as the Bhakta has visioned the Almighty and settled accounts with his Prarabdha.

As soon as the Prarabdha has been worked away, the Jeeva repairs to one of the heavenly abodes suited to his position, and waits till the end of the Mahakalpa. The Jeevas who have had "God-vision" fall under 5 heads. They are Pâdayogins (partial sages), Yogins, Tapaswins, Gnanees, and Mahagnanees, according to their spiritual worth. *Pâdayogins* tarry in a part of Maharloka reserved for this class. This world consists of two parts: one inhabited by Jeevas liable to relapse into Samsara, and the other occupied by those who are not so liable. The latter are mere sojourners who will in proper time proceed to Vaikunta. The next division of *Aparoksha Gnanins* called *Yogins* dwell similarly in Janoloka. This world is wholly inaccessible to any Jeeva that has not had "God-Vision." No soul that is liable to the bondage of physical rebirth has access to this place. The sages known technically as *Tapaswins* repair to Tapoloka, a region higher than

Janoloka, and similarly barred against all but Jeevas coming there *en route* to Vaikunta. Those who are termed Gnanees dwell in *Satyaloka.* The highest division of sages known as Mahagnanees sojourn in a portion of Vaikunta itself, the section reserved for the Unreleased souls who wait there to be transferred to the released section at the end of the Mahakalpa and the ensuing Pralaya.

All these Jeevas sojourning in the various worlds appropriate for each class, hold on to their Linga Sarira. They are not yet free. Their liberation is no doubt assured, but they have to wait. At the end of the 100 years of the Four-faced Brahma's life (36,000 Kalpas, representing many millions of human years) they seek entrance into the womb of the Supreme Being through the Four-faced Brahma. The process by which all the Jeevas are rolled in or involuted, has been briefly adverted to in a previous chapter. The Jeeva lower in rank merges in the one that is higher, and he in his turn into one higher than himself, and so on, right up to the Four-faced Brahma, gathering up all the Jeevas in this manner. Virancha, the four-faced, enters into the Father's womb and dwells there unmanifest during the whole of the Maha Pralaya.

In this long night, all souls released as well as unreleased, are gathered together in God, inactive and quiescent. At the close of the night, and at the bestirring of daybreak, all the souls, released and unreleased, issue forth for their respective, appointed, destination. The unreleased souls who have to go down to bodily incarnations pass through the Divine forms of Vasudeva, Sankárshana, Pradyumna, and Anirudha. The unreleased souls who have had " God-Vision " and are

qualified to be released, go over to Vasudeva, issue thence, follow the four-faced Virancha to the river of immortality (Viraja), and take with him a plunge in the sacred waters. This bath unhusks them of the Linga Sarira and sets them free. They enter Vaikunta as liberated souls. The only remaining section viz., the liberated souls of previous Kalpas who remained in God's womb for the Pralayic night, issue from God's womb and get into the body of the Vasudeva-form, and from here, they march on to their own abode in Vaikunta, without having anything to do with the Sankarshana and other forms of the Divine Evolution and unconcerned in the processes of creation connected with the Sankarshana and other Avatars engaged in creative activity.

The *Linga Bhanga* of the Aparoksha Gnani is the line of demarcation between souls in bondage and those that are free.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOKSHA—RELEASE.

The Released souls are said to dwell in a region known as Vykunta. This is the highest Heaven, on reaching which, the Jeeva is not liable to revert to Samsâra.

नचपुनरावर्तते । नचपुनरावर्तते ॥

"He does not revert," "does not revert" is the solemn language of the last aphorism of the Brahma Sootras.

Every religious system presents a descriptive picture of Heaven to its followers as much to be believed in as an article of faith as to furnish an incentive to a religious life. Some systems seem to offer fantastic attractions. It is said that the Mahomedan faith speaks of *Houris* (beautiful women) as a great feature of Heavenly life. With Christians, the idea of meeting kith and kin again, and dwelling with them in heavenly fellowship, is somewhat prominently brought out and emphasized. They do not believe in transmigration of souls. Relations and friends who have been dear below, are supposed to be particularly drawn together in a reunion of kinship and friendship, and riveted together by ties of affection not to be sundered for ever. Christian divines dwell on this feature of reunion with fondness, and console bereaved mourners by drawing attention to this prospect of heavenly life.

Among Hindus there are representatives of every possible view of Heaven. Some of them consider that it is an abode set apart for the released. Others deem it a mere state or condition of the soul. There are, in our books, gorgeous descriptions of

golden walls, rubied pavements, towers and turrets, thrones and canopies dazzling with diamonds, to convey an idea of superb splendour surrounding the Almighty.

Nyaya philosophy inculcates the view that *absence of pain* constitutes the joy of the liberated soul. This system considers pleasure as a negative state merely, being synonymous with painlessness.

Adwaita philosophy towers high in speculative flights upon this point. It holds absorption into Brahman as the goal, an absolute merger and identity with the Supreme Being. Adwaita holds the extinction of the soul as the ultimate goal, an identity reached by absorption into the Para Brahman. As there never was anything really different, what vanished is the inscrutable Maya and nothing else, according to Monists. Hence, when the identity with Brahman is realised, all individuality is annihilated, and the liberated soul ceases to exist phenomenally by being and becoming one with the Lord. Unity is thus the *Summum Bonum* in Sri Sankara's system. As Brahman is attributeless, the Jeeva becomes that likewise. He abides as such for ever. He may be luminosity, but illumines nothing. He is knowledge but cognizes not any object, not being a knower. He is happiness itself but is not happy. He has thus no will, intellect, or volition, and no joys and no sorrows.

It is a favourite simile with the sacred writers to compare individual souls to sparks shot out of Brahman the central mass of fire, and to depict release as a regathering and absorption of the sparks into their source. It is not unusual also to illustrate the same idea by comparing Jeevas to rivers, which,

having had individuality and separate names, merge in the ocean and become absorbed therein, and lose their name and form by the merger. These illustrations are consistent with both Dwaita and Adwaita, if the simile is not strained too far, and if the elements of similitude reasonably interpreted.

The extinction of the soul is what Visishta Adwaitins and Dwaitins fight shy of as a serious error. They have no patience with the doctrine that released souls have no consciousness of pleasures and joys. Such a condition, would, in their view, be no better than that of inanimate matter. The luminosity of a crystal is nothing to it, and does not elevate it above the level of minerals. If the released soul merged into and unified with Brahman, is but a luminous crystal, that position is, according to non-Monistic schools, not worth attaining, and is not a consummation devoutly to be wished for.

Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhva hold that released souls are not absorbed into Brahman in the sense of attaining identity with the Supreme Being. The Jeeva still retains his individuality and never loses it. He dwells in Vykunta and enjoys bliss in the Divine Presence and fellowship.

On one point of doctrine, Sri Madhva differs from Sri Ramanuja. Whereas the latter holds that all released souls enjoy an equal measure of bliss in Vykunta, Sri Madhva considers that there is no equality in bliss among Jeevas and that there are degrees of enjoyment graduated and allotted according to their worth. Sri Ramanuja's view is that the released souls attain to a bliss equal to that of God Himself. Sri Madhva sees blasphemy in this theory of equality.

There are 4 kinds of Mukti recognised in the scriptures, *Salokya*, *Sameepya*, *Saroopya*, and *Sayujya*. To dwell in the same region as God, and to dwell in close proximity with Him, are the first two conditions. Similarity in a special sense with God, and the privilege of enjoying by, in, and through, the Divine limbs themselves, constitute the last two. These conditions apply to the Muktas according to their worth.

The one characteristic feature of all Muktas is that they have, none of them, the slightest trace of pain.

In this respect, they are all alike. As to bliss, there are infinite varieties, that of God being at the top, an absolutely unattainable Perfection of Bliss. Bliss is of course not a negation. Pleasure and pain are two distinct realities.

The joy that suffuses the soul is akin to what is felt in profound sleep even in the state of Samsara, being purely spiritual in nature. After the riddance of Linga Sarira, the soul's enjoyments (or sufferings in the case of Tamasâs) take place with the organs pure and simple of the spirit itself. Prakriti, matter, has no lot or part in these functions. The spiritual sense-organs and the spiritual mind act in the released state freely. The Muktas see God and enjoy Him by spiritual *Aparoksha*.

In the state of Samsara, Sakshi, the organ of spiritual perception, does cognize certain objects. For instance, self-consciousness known as अहं 'I,' is a cognition of the spiritual organ, Sakshi. So, pleasure and pain are always realisations by the spiritual sense. Every idea of the sensuous mind (as distinguished from the spiritual mind) is cognised by Sakshi and presented

to the soul. Time and space are also the objects of Sakshi perception.

The difference between a mental idea and a spiritual idea is, that the former may be a delusion and may be corrected or rectified by a later idea or knowledge, while the latter is immutable. A mental idea is liable to be doubted or controverted, but a spiritual idea is not. We feel pleasure or pain and there is an end of it. It never forms the subject of debate afterwards or at any time. No man comes to doubt it and asks himself, "is it true that I felt the sensation of joy, grief, or pain?" But as to a mental perception, it is only too evident that hallucinations often occur and rectifications by sounder perceptions and experiences.

In Moksha, all is spiritual thought, will, and emotion. Delusion is then unknown. By the merest volition every conceivable desire is gratified. The Jeeva is able to assume any shape or take any body. He has absolutely no difficulty or impediment in gratifying any wish, for, his equipment consists of organs which are self-luminous luminosities whose light is not hidden or obstructed by impediments or partitions.

It is a fundamental theory in respect to the soul that whatever appertains to it, is an uncreated entity. The capacity of the Jeeva, its aptitudes and tendencies, its joys and sorrows, are the permanent attributes of the soul, undifferentiated from its essence.

Hence, the bliss felt in Moksha is something not created and bestowed on the Mukta, but something which had all along remained latent and inherent in him and which, by the Grace and blessing of God,

became patent after redemption. It is the soul's essence that becomes unfolded and manifest, the obstructions and impediments having been removed by God. Hence redemption in the Hindu sense is self-realization, the bliss attained being not a windfall of an acquisition, but a mere blossoming of the soul's essential nature.

If good works, meritorious acts, happened to be performed by any Jeeva after the attainment of 'God vision' and before the snapping of Linga Sarira, that merit is not lost. It tends to add to the volume and intensity of the Heavenly bliss for him. A demerit under similar circumstances has the opposite effect of dimming his glory for a time, though, of course, pain is entirely out of the question for a Mukta.

Perfect harmony and peace reigns in the region. Jarring interests are unknown for the simple reason that no one aspires for what he is not fit for, nor fails to obtain what is due to him When material prisons clung to him and imposed their laws on him, his desires, thoughts, and actions, were not his own, but the resultants of a conflict between his inherent tendencies and those of his jailers. This gave rise to a double government. This was producing disharmony at every turn by giving birth to unworthy aspirations and desires. *Samsâra* was a veritable disease for the reason that a foreign body perpetually irritated the soul by its presence. In the released state, the Jeeva is free from this clog. He is therefore able to will, think, and act, aright. No conflict is, in the very nature of things, conceivable. The Supreme Being ever present with him in the closest proximity, remained invisible and unrecognized during Samsara by reason of the Avidya

screens. Those screens having been removed, the Sakshi of the Jeeva realizes the Divine fellowship without let or hindrance. The most exhilarating feature of Heavenly life is the Bliss of love directed towards God. What is enjoyed is the perfect bliss of love, perfect in the sense that every Mukta has the fullest measure of which he is capable. During Samsàra too, he tasted something of love, but it is here in Vykunta that he realizes its potency and blissfulness, its grace and beauty, its charms and ectasies.

P. V. S. BROTHERS, PRINTERS, MADRAS.